MAʻĀRIFUL-QURʼĀN

BY

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Volume 8

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Preface

الحمدلله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على رسوله الكريم، وعلى آله وصحبه
أجمعين وعلى كل من تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين

By the grace of Allah Ta'ālā this last volume of Ma'āriful Qur'ān is now in your hands. When presenting it to the readers, I am unable to find suitable words to express my gratitude to Allah Ta'ālā who has enabled us to accomplish this project. It was a long journey that I commenced more than thirty years ago with numerous obstacles in my way. Alhamdulillah, it is reaching its final destination today. Ma'āriful Qur'ān, with all its eight volumes, is perhaps the first complete and comprehensive commentary on the Holy Qur'ān that appeared in English, and I hope it will help the English speaking people to fully understand the message of the last Divine Book in its true perspective.

I am extremely grateful to Maulānā Aḥmed Khalīl Azīz who translated this volume in such a speedy manner that the work did not stop for a moment. May Allah grant him the best of health and bless him with the best of rewards both here and in the hereafter.

Acknowledgements are due to Mr. Ibrāhīm Nafīs who composed the whole work, to Mr. Rafat Saghīr Farooqui and Maulānā 'Abdullāh Memon who were responsible for proofreading, and to Mr. Yūsuf Ghani who not only rechecked the final proof but also prepared the basic material for the Index.

I am also thankful to Mr. Khalīl Ashraf 'Usmānī, Mr. Isḥāq Noor and Mr. Yousuf Noor whose financial contributions facilitated the process of translation and publication of this volume. May Allah bless all of them with His pleasure and His rewards in the hereafter.

Lastly, I would request the readers to remember the esteemed author of the book, all the translators and this humble servant in their prayers. May Allah make this book beneficial to all those who wish to understand the message of their Creator and to order their lives in accordance with its guidance. A'min.

Muḥammad Taqi Usmānī

11 Rajab 1425 - 28th August 2004

Transliteration Scheme

Arabic Letter	Name of Letter	English Transliteration
ا	الف -- Alif	a
ب	باء -- bā	b
ت	تاء -- tā	t
ث	ثاء -- thā	th
ج	جیم -- jīm	j
ح	حاء -- ḥā	ḥ
خ	خاء -- khā	kh
د	دال -- dāl	d
ذ	ذال -- dhāl	dh
ر	راء -- rā	r
ز	زای -- zā	z
س	سین -- sīn	s
ش	شین -- shīn	sh
ص	صاد -- ṣād	ṣ
ض	ضاد -- ḍād	ḍ
ط	طاء -- ṭā	ṭ
ظ	ظاء -- ẓā	ẓ
ع	عین -- ʻayn	ʻ
غ	غین -- ghayn	gh
ف	فاء -- fā	f
ق	قاف -- qāf	q
ک	کاف -- kāf	k
ل	لام -- lām	l
م	میم -- mīm	m
ن	نون -- nūn	n
ہ	هاء -- hā	h
و	واؤ -- wāw	w
ء	همزه -- hamzah	ʼ
ی	یاء -- yā	y

Short Vowels

	: Fatḥah	a
	: Kasrah	i
	: Ḍammah	u

Long Vowels

ا	: Shortened Alif	ā
آ	: Maddah Alif	ā
ی	: Maddah Yā	ī
وٗ	: Maddah Wāw	ū

Dipthongs

اى	: Alif and Yā	ay (also ai in some cases)
او۔اوٗ	: Alif and Wāw	aw (also au in some cases)

Sūrah Muḥammad

Sūrah Muḥammad was revealed in Madīnah It has 38 Verses and 4 Sections.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

اَلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ اَضَلَّ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿١﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَاٰمَنُوْا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّهُوَالْحَقُّ
مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۙ كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ وَاَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٢﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْبَاطِلَ وَاَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْحَقَّ مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۭ
كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ اَمْثَالَهُمْ ﴿٣﴾

Those who disbelieved, and prevented (others) from Allah's way, He (Allah) has rendered their deeds vain. [1] **And those who believed and did righteous deeds and believed in that which is revealed to Muḥammad-and it is the truth (that has come) from their Lord-, He will write off their evil deeds, and will set aright their state of affairs.** [2] **That is because the disbelievers have followed falsehood, while the believers have followed the truth (that has come) from their Lord. This is how Allah explains their (respective) situations to the people.** [3]

Commentary

Another name of Sūrah Muḥammad is Sūrah Al-Qitāl [Sūrah of war] because this Sūrah lays down the rules of Jihād and Qitāl [i.e.armed struggle in the cause of Allah]. This Sūrah was revealed immediately

after migration to Madīnah. Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ is reported to have said regarding Verse 13 كَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ "And how many a city ... have We destroyed!,..." that it was revealed in Makkah, because it was revealed at a time when the Holy Prophet ﷺ left Makkah with the intention of migration, and looked at the sacred city of Makkah and the Holy Ka'bah and said: "You are the dearest of all cities to me in the world. Had it not been for Makkans driving me out from this place, I would never have given up this Holy City." According to the technical parlance of the Qur'ānic commentators, verses revealed in the course of migration from Makkah to Madīnah are regarded as Makkī. In sum, the Sūrah was revealed immediately after migration to Madīnah, reaching shere, ordinances relating to *jihād* and war with infidels were revealed.

In the phrase صَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ "prevented (others) from Allah's way" (47:1), "Allah's way" refers to Islam. The phrase اَضَلَّ اَعْمَالَهُمْ "He (Allah) has rendered their deeds vain" (47:1) includes actions which are good in themselves, as for instance, helping and assisting the destitute, supporting and protecting the neighbours, generosity, charity and other good deeds. These deeds are, though, good and righteous in themselves, in the Hereafter they will yield benefit only if blessed with faith, because faith is a necessary condition for the credibility of good actions. Thus these righteous deeds will be of no use to the infidels in the Hereafter. The disbelievers take their comfort in this worldly life as a reward of their good deeds. In the Hereafter they will be punished with Hell-fire.

وَاٰمَنُوْا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ

...and believed in that which is revealed to Muḥammad ...(47:2)

Although the previous sentence has referred to faith and righteous deeds which includes faith in the messengership of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the revelation that was sent down to him, this sentence specifies explicitly the fact that the actual basis of faith is to embrace all the teachings of the Last Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The word "بال" (*bāl*) in "وَاَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ"...and will set aright their state of affairs..(47:2)" is sometimes used in the sense of state of affairs and condition, and at other times in the sense of heart. Here it could refer to both the senses. In the first sense, it means that Allah has set all their affairs aright, that is, He has set aright all their matters of this world and

of the Hereafter. In the second sense, it would mean that Allah has improved their hearts. This also has the same implication, that is, corrected all their works, because correction of works is a logical result of improvement of heart, both being necessary to each other.

Verse 4...

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَثْخَنتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا
الْوَثَاقَ فَإِمَّا مَنًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا

So, when you encounter those who disbelieve, then (aim at) smiting the necks, until when you have broken their strength thoroughly, then tie fast the bond, (by making them captives). Then choose (to set them free) either (as) a favour, or (after receiving) ransom, until the war throws down its load of arms...

Commentary

This verse lays down two points of law: first, it lays down that when war breaks the might and power of the enemy, and does away with their pomp and glory, they should be arrested rather than being killed. The Muslims are then given two options regarding the prisoners of war - either confer favour on them and release them without ransom or compensation; or release them against payment of ransom. There are several ways in which ransom may be taken, for instance by exchanging Muslim prisoners of war for non-Muslim prisoners of war. It is also possible to set them free after accepting pecuniary ransom. This injunction is apparently in conflict with the rule mentioned in Sūrah Al-Anfāl. The prisoners of the battle of Badr were released against the payment of ransom, but Allah disapproved and expressed His displeasure against those who opined in favour of releasing them on ransom. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: "A grave punishment of Allah for this action of ours was very close, and if it had been meted out, no one besides 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb and Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh would have been spared, because only these two companions had disagreed with the idea of accepting pecuniary compensation for the release of the Prisoners of War (POW). (For details, see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, vol 4. pp 272-281). In short, the verses of Sūrah Al-Anfāl prohibits release of prisoners against ransom,

consequently their release without ransom would be prohibited all the more.

On the other hand, this verse of Sūrah Muḥammad permits both the alternatives. Therefore, most of the Companions and jurists express the view that this verse of Sūrah Muḥammad has abrogated the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl. Tafsīr Maẓharī records this to be the opinion of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar, Ḥasan, 'Aṭā' رضى الله عنهم اجمعين and majority of the Companions and majority of the jurists. Among the jurists, Thawrī, Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad and Isḥāq also hold this view.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that on the occasion of the battle of Badr, the number of Muslims was small. Therefore, releasing the prisoners against ransom or releasing them as a gesture of grace were both prohibited. Finally, when Islam and Muslims went on to achieve total ascendancy, Allah Ta'ālā abrogated the earlier injunction, and revealed this verse which permits both options. Qāḍī Thana'ullah cites this in his Tafsīr Maẓharī confirming that this is the authentic and preferred view, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself acted upon it, and after him the Righteous Caliphs also did the same. Therefore, this verse repeals the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl - the reason being that the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl was revealed on the occasion of the battle of Badr which took place in the 2nd year of Hijrah. The prisoners that were released by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the battle of Ḥudaibiyah without ransom in the 6th year of Hijrah was in accordance with this verse of Sūrah Muḥammad.

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ that about eighty Makkans climbed down the mount Tan'īm with the intention of launching a sudden attack on the Messenger of Allah and the Muslim camp. They were all captured, but the Messenger of Allah set them free without any compensation, lest it became the cause of war on that critical occasion. At this, the following verse of Sūrah Al-Fatḥ [48:24] was revealed:

وَهُوَالَّذِىْ كَفَّ اَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَاَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْ بَعْدِ اَنْ اَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ

"It is He who held their hands back from you, and your hands from them in the valley of Makkah, after giving you victory over them." 2

According to one version, a popular view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah is that setting the prisoners of war free with or without ransom is not lawful. Therefore, the Ḥanafī scholars regard this verse of Sūrah Muḥammad as abrogated by the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl. But Tafsīr Maẓharī made it clear that the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl was revealed first, and the verse of Sūrah Muḥammad later - thus the later verse repealing the earlier verse. Therefore, the preferred view of Imām A'ẓam - in keeping with the opinion of the great majority of the Companions ﷺ and leading jurists - it is lawful, if it is in the best interest and well-being of the Muslims. From amongst the Ḥanafī scholars, 'Allāmah Ibn Humām shows his inclination towards this view in his Fatḥ-ul-Qadīr. He writes that according to the version cited in Qudūrī and Hidāyah, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah does not see it permissible to set prisoners of war free against payment of ransom. But according to another version of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, cited in As-Siyar-ul-Kabīr, it is permitted in conformity with the majority view. Among these two versions, the latter is more likely to be his preferred view. Imām Ṭaḥāwī in his Ma'ānī-l-'Athār has also regarded the latter version as that of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah.

In sum, according to the majority of Companions ﷺ and jurists, neither of the verses under discussion is abrogated. The wordings of the verses of Sūrah Al-Anfāl and Sūrah Muḥammad leave us with the impression that none of these two can be called the abrogator or the abrogated. In fact, they are two injunctions for different situations. The leader of the Muslims may adopt either of the options depending on the conditions and needs of the Muslims. Qurṭubī, on the basis of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ practice and that of the Righteous Caliphs ﷺ, has shown that the prisoners of war were sometimes killed, sometimes enslaved, at other times they were set free against ransom, and yet at other times they were released without compensation. Exacting ransom includes exchange of non-Muslim POWs for Muslim POWs or setting non-Muslim POW free against pecuniary compensation. Having cited these cases, he says that verses that have been regarded as abrogator and abrogated are in fact *Muḥkam* or operative and perspicuous. Thus none of them is abrogated, because when the disbelievers are arrested and come into our control, the leader of the Muslims has four options: [1] if he deems appropriate, he may kill them ; [2] if he feels that it is in the best interest of the Muslims,

he may hold them in bondage; [3] if it is appropriate, he may release them in lieu of pecuniary ransom or in exchange of Muslim POWs ; and [4] if it seems proper, they may be released.

"This is the view of the scholars of Madīnah, Imām Shāfi'ī and Abū 'Ubayd. Imām Ṭaḥāwī cites this as the opinion of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah as well, although his generally known view is that which we have already mentioned. [Qurṭubī: V. 16, p. 228; sentence 16].

Four Options Regarding POW

The foregoing discussion makes clear that the leader of the Muslims has four options regarding prisoners of war. There is a consensus of the entire Ummah on the permissibility of killing them and holding them in bondage. Although there is some difference of opinion on the issue of setting them free against ransom or without ransom, majority of the jurists holds the latter options lawful as well.

The Issue of Slavery in Islam

A question arises here regarding prisoners of war. There are some juristic differences whether they could be set free, but there is no difference of opinion with regard to the permissibility of the latter two cases, i.e. killing them or holding them in bondage. Why did the Qur'ān not mention these two cases explicitly? It merely mentions the two cases where it is permissible to release them. Imām Fakhr-ud-dīn Rāzī responds to this in his Tafsīr Kabīr. He says that only those two options have been mentioned here which are not permissible to enslave Arab POW. Killing of the crippled is not lawful either. Besides, the question of killing has been dealt with elaborately earlier. [Tafsīr Kabīr: p. 508; v. 7].

Another point needs consideration: the permissibility of killing and enslaving was a common knowledge; all knew that the two cases are lawful. As opposed to this, the setting free of POW was prohibited on the occasion of the battle of Badr. On the present occasion, however, the intention was to permit them to be released with or without compensation. Here, there was no need to mention cases that were already known to be permissible. Therefore, these verses are silent about them. Thus, it is not correct to conclude from these verses that after their revelation, the permission to kill or enslave them has been abrogated. If the injunction to enslave had been abrogated, its prohibition would have been mentioned

somewhere in the Qur'ān or in a Ḥadīth. If this verse was an indication of its prohibition, then why were POW held in bondage by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and after him by the Companions ؓ so ardently dedicated to Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, in a large number of battles after the revelation of the present verses? The narratives of enslaving are recorded in such large numbers in Ḥadīth and history with chains of transmission effectively uninterrupted that denying them would be unreasonable obstinacy.

An objection and its rebuttal

Let us now address the objection that Islam is the great upholder of human rights. Then how is it that it allows the enslaving of human beings?

This objection is a fallacy based on the false analogy drawn between Islamic concept of slavery and its practice in other religions and communities; whereas in Islam after the rights given to the slaves and the social status granted to them, they can hardly be called slaves in the generally accepted sense of the word. They in fact constitute a brotherhood. If the reality and spirit of Islamic concept of slavery is analyzed, we will realize that no better treatment can be meted out to POW than these instances found in Islamic history. A famous orientalist in his book Arab Civilization writes:

> "When the word 'slave' is uttered in the presence of a European who is used to reading American writings, he conceives in his mind those helpless people who are shackled with chains, around whose necks are iron collars, who are lashed with whips and driven forth, whose food is barely enough to subsist, and for whom nothing more than dark dungeons are available to live in. I am not concerned here with how far this is true and to what extent atrocities committed by the British in America for the past several years fit the description . . . However, there is absolutely no doubt about the fact that Islam's concept of slavery is completely different from the Christian concept of slavery ."

The truth of the matter is that in many instances there is no better solution than enslaving the POW, because if they are not enslaved, then logically there are three ways of sorting out the problem: either kill them, or set them free, or keep them as prisoners permanently. More often than not, all these three possibilities might not be in the best interest of the

Muslim Ummah. Killing them might not be appropriate because the POW might be a talented person and his talent would be wasted and lost. Setting him free might be risking the danger of his going away to Dar-ul-ḥarb and once again conspiring against the Muslims. Now there remains two options only: Either to keep him as a prisoner for good and confine him to some remote and separate island as has been the practice nowadays, or enslave him, make use of his talent and take full care of his human rights. It is obvious to every one which of these options is the best, especially since the Islamic viewpoint regarding slaves has been made plain in a famous Ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as follows:

اخوانكم جعلهم اللّٰه تحت ايديكم فمن كان اخوه تحت يديه فليطعمه ممّا ياكل وليلبسه ممّا يلبس ولا يكلّفه' ما يغلبه فان كلّفه' ما يغلبه فليعنه' (بخارى، مسلم، ابو داود وغيرهم)

"Your slaves are your brothers, and Allah has put them under your control. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats, and dress him of what he wears. Do not overburden them [slaves] to do things beyond their capacity, and if you do so, then help them." [Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dawūd and others]

The social and civil rights that Islam has accorded to the slaves are almost equal to free individuals. Thus, as opposed to other nations, Islam has not only permitted the slaves to marry but also emphasized that the masters should marry off those of their slaves and slavegirls who are righteous [24:32] so much so that he can even marry a free woman. A slave's share from the spoils of war is equal to that of a free *mujāhid*. If he gives refuge to an enemy, it would be respected in the same way as given by a free individual. There are so many injunctions in Qur'ān and Ḥadīth regarding good treatment of slaves that if they are collected together, they can be compiled into a voluminous book. Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه says that the last words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ before his departure from this earthly life were:

الصّلوٰة الصّلوٰة، اتّقوا اللّٰہَ فيما ملكت ايمانكم

"Take care of prayer; take care of prayer. Keep your duty to Allah regarding slaves under your command".

Islam organized education and training programme for slaves: its

effect was seen during the reign of 'Abd-ūl-Mālik Ibn Marwān in almost all the provinces of Islamic State. Some of the best and greatest authorities on education and intellectual development were slaves whose chronicles are narrated in several history books. Furthermore, this nominal slavery was gradually abolished or reduced. There is a huge number of Qur'ānic verses and Holy Prophetic Traditions which set out the virtues and merits of setting the slaves free. There is no act better than emancipation of slaves. In juristic injunctions, pretexts have been looked for to emancipate slaves: expiation for violating fast, for murder, for *zihār*, for violating oaths and vows - in all these cases the first compulsory command is to emancipate a slave. A Ḥadīth tells us that if a person has slapped a slave, its expiation is to set him free. Thus, the Companions used to emancipate slaves in large numbers. The author of al-Najm-ul-Wahhāj gives us the following table of the slaves set free by the Companions:

1. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا 69
2. Sayyidnā 'Abbās ﷺ 70
3. Sayyidnā Ḥakīm Ibn Ḥizām ﷺ 100
4. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ 1000
5. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān Ghani ﷺ 20
6. Sayyidnā Dhul-Kilā" Al-Himyari ﷺ .... 8000 [in a day]
7. Sayyidnā 'Abdurraḥmān Ibn 'Auf ﷺ ....30 000 [11]

This table shows that only seven Companions ﷺ set free 39, 259 slaves. Obviously, thousands of other Companions ﷺ must have emancipated countless slaves.

To sum up: anyone who looks impartially at the comprehensive reforms Islam introduced in the system of slavery, he cannot escape the conclusion that drawing analogy between Islamic concept of slavery and its practice among other nations is absolutely false. In fact, permission to enslave POW after these reforms is a great boon to them.

Furthermore, holding POW in bondage is only up to the point of permissibility which means that if an Islamic State deems it appropriate, it may hold them in bondage, but it has not been taken as an obligatory or as a commendable act. As a matter of fact, the collective teachings of

Qur'ān and Ḥadīth lead us to believe that emancipating them is more meritorious. Then this permission, too, extends up to the time the Muslims have not entered into a compact with the enemies. If there is an agreement with the enemies which includes a clause to the effect that neither the enemies will enslave Muslim POW nor will the Muslims enslave the enemy POW, the clause will be binding. In our times, many countries have entered into such covenants. If Muslim countries have participated in such covenants, it would not be lawful for them to enslave as long as this agreement stands.

Verses ...4 - 11

ذلك ولو يشاء الله لانتصر منهم ولكن ليبلوا بعضكم ببعض
والذين قتلوا في سبيل الله فلن يضل اعمالهم ﴿٤﴾ سيهديهم
ويصلح بالهم ﴿٥﴾ ويدخلهم الجنة عرفها لهم ﴿٦﴾ يايها الذين
امنوا ان تنصروا الله ينصركم ويثبت اقدامكم ﴿٧﴾ والذين كفروا
فتعسا لهم واضل اعمالهم ﴿٨﴾ ذلك بانهم كرهوا ما انزل الله
فاحبط اعمالهم ﴿٩﴾ افلم يسيروا في الارض فينظروا كيف كان
عاقبة الذين من قبلهم دمر الله عليهم وللكفرين امثالها ﴿١٠﴾
ذلك بان الله مولى الذين امنوا وان الكفرين لا مولى لهم ﴿١١﴾

That (is the law). And if Allah willed, He would have (Himself) taken vengeance upon them, but (Allah ordered you to fight,) so that He may test some of you through some others. And those who are killed in Allah's way, He will never let their deeds go in vain. [4] **(Instead,) He will guide them, and will set aright their state of affairs,** [5] **and will admit them to the Paradise He has identified for them.** [6] **O those who believe, if you will help (the religion prescribed by) Allah, He will help you, and will stabilize your footings.** [7] **As for those who disbelieve, (destined) for them is destruction, and He has rendered their deeds vain.** [8] **That is because they hate what Allah has sent down; therefore Allah has nullified their deeds.** [9] **Have they not travelled in the land so that they might**

see how was the end of those before them? Allah brought utter destruction on them. And (ready) for (these) disbelievers are the likes thereof. [10] **That is because Allah is the supporter of those who believe. As for the disbelievers, there is no supporter for them.** [11]

Commentary

Wisdom in the Legality of Jihād

وَلَوْيَشَآءُ اللّٰهُ لَانْتَصَرَمِنْهُمْ (And if Allah willed, He would have [Himself] taken vengeance upon them,...- 47:4) In this verse Allah says that legalizing of armed struggle in His cause against the infidels is a blessing as it replaces celestial punishments. The previous nations were punished with celestial and earthly calamities for their infidelity to Allah, for idolatry and for rebellion against Allah. The Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ could have suffered the same fate but the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a mercy unto mankind. as a result, the Ummah has been spared destruction by such general calamities. In place of them, *jihād shar'i* has been instituted. This, compared to general calamities, has many facilities and expedience. First of all, in general calamities the entire nation including men, women and children are decimated whereas in the case of Jihād according to the rules of war, women and children are safe and secure. As far as men are concerned, only those of the unbelieving men will have to face the believers who commit aggression and violence against those who protect the religion of Allah. Even among them not all men are killed, because many of them develop the ability to embrace Islamic faith, (or submit themselves as subjects of an Islamic state). Another wisdom in the institution of *Jihād* is that both the sides of war - Muslims and the enemies - are tested: which side is willing to sacrifice his life and wealth at the command of Allah and which side obstinately and stubbornly continues to reject the Truth or, having seen the crystal-clear evidence of Truth and being convinced by the Qur'ānic arguments, embraces Islam.

وَالَّذِيْنَ قُتِلُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ فَلَنْ يُّضِلَّ اَعْمَالَهُمْ (And those who are killed in Allah's way, He will never let their deeds go in vain. - 47:4) At the beginning of the Sūrah it was asserted that those who persist in infidelity and idolatry and obstruct others from practising Islam, Allah rendered all their good deeds void, such as charity, alms, donations, and philanthropic and public welfare activities, because these deeds are not worthy of reward in the Hereafter without faith. Faith is a necessary condition for good works to

be rewarded in the next world. As opposed to the case of the infidels, this verse asserts that those who sacrificed their lives to acquire the glorious privilege of a martyr in the cause of Allah - Allah will never imprint their works with irreverence, profanity or damnation. Even if they did commit sins, their sins will not have a negative impact on their good actions. In fact, often these good deeds of theirs will serve as an expiation for their sins.

سَيَهْدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ (He will guide them, and will set aright their state of affairs - 47:5). This sentence refers to two of Allah's bounties: First, He will steer them by His guidance; and secondly, He will improve their conditions. The word "state of affairs" includes the conditions of both the worlds - those of this world and those of the Hereafter. Even if a Muslim did not acquire the glorious privilege of a martyr in this world, he too will receive the reward of a martyr; and in the Hereafter he will be spared the torment of the grave and the anxiety of resurrection. If he violated the rights of some human beings, Allah will take upon Himself the responsibility of vindicating him and clearing him of all blame. Steering them by His guidance through the Holy Prophet ﷺ means causing them to reach their desired destination which is the Paradise. The Qur'ān says that the inmates of Paradise, having entered the gardens of Paradise, will show their gratitude to Allah by saying:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ هَدٰىنَا لِهٰذَا

"All praise to Allah who has led us unto this. [7:43].

وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَّفَهَا لَهُمْ (and will admit them to the Paradise He has identified for them. - 47:6). This is the third bounty of Allah. He will not only admit them into Paradise but will identify for them the gardens of bliss and will make them familiar with such bounties as houris and mansions in a way that it would seem to them that they have been living there since eternity. If such an acquaintance was not made, Paradise would have seemed a strange world. It would have taken them time to find their abode, to accustom themselves with the new environment, and they would not overcome the sense of unfamiliarity for a period of time.

Abū Hurayrah ؓ reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "By Him who sent me with the religion of Truth! As you are closely familiar with your wives and homes in this world, so you will know your abode

and your wives of Paradise - rather even better. Some reports of Ḥadīth tell us that an angel will be appointed for every single inmate of Paradise who will introduce them to their abode and wives in Paradise. Allah knows best.

وَلِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ اَمْثَالُهَا (And [ready] for [these] disbelievers are the likes thereof. - 47:10). Grammatically, the article "*alif lām*" *in al-kafirīna*" in this context is used to indicate some specific disbelievers, and refers to the infidels of Makkah. The purpose of this sentence is to warn them: as the previous generations were punished for their iniquity, so will you meet similar fate for your iniquitous behavior. Do not be unconcerned!

وَاَنَّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ لَا مَوْلٰى لَهُمْ (As for the disbelievers, there is no supporter for them. - 47:11). The word مولى "*mawlā*" is used in several different senses. One of its meanings is "protector" or "supporter". This is the sense in which it is used here. Another sense of the word is "owner/master". In Qur'ān [10:30] we come across: رُدُّوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰىهُمُ الْحَقِّ "They will be returned to Allah, their Master, the Truth" (10:30). In this phrase, Allah is called the "*mawlā*" of the infidels, that is, their Master / Owner because the mastership / ownership of Allah extends over all - the believers as well as the non-believers; without any exclusion.

Verses 12 - 15

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يَتَمَتَّعُوْنَ وَيَاْكُلُوْنَ كَمَا تَاْكُلُ الْاَنْعَامُ
وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَّهُمْ ﴿۱۲﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ اَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكَ
الَّتِيْٓ اَخْرَجَتْكَ ۚ اَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ فَلَا نَاصِرَ لَهُمْ ﴿۱۳﴾ اَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ
مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ كَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهٗ سُوْٓءُ عَمَلِهٖ وَاتَّبَعُوْٓا اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ﴿۱۴﴾ مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ
الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ؕ فِيْهَآ اَنْهٰرٌ مِّنْ مَّآءٍ غَيْرِ اٰسِنٍ ۚ وَاَنْهٰرٌ مِّنْ لَّبَنٍ لَّمْ
يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهٗ ۚ وَاَنْهٰرٌ مِّنْ خَمْرٍ لَّذَّةٍ لِّلشّٰرِبِيْنَ ۚ وَاَنْهٰرٌ مِّنْ عَسَلٍ مُّصَفًّى
ؕ وَلَهُمْ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ؕ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي

النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَآءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَآءَ هُمْ ﴿١٥﴾

Surely, Allah will admit those who believe and do good deeds to the gardens beneath which rivers flow. And those who disbelieve enjoy (the worldly life), and eat as cattle eat, and the Fire is the final abode for them. [12] **And how many a town, stronger in might than your town that has expelled you, have We destroyed! Then, there was none to help them.** [13] **Then, can one who holds on to a clear proof from his Lord be like those for whom their evil deeds are beautified, and who followed their desires?** [14] **(Here is) a description of the Paradise that is promised for the God-fearing! In it there are rivers of water, never spoiling, and rivers of milk the taste of which would not go bad, and rivers of wine, delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of honey, fully purified. And for them there are all sorts of fruits, and forgiveness from their Lord. Are they like those who will live in Fire forever, and will be given boiling water to drink, and it will tear their bowels into pieces.** [15]

Commentary

Essential Characteristics of Paradise

Verse sixteen mentions four kinds of favours and blessings in the next world, that is, rivers of pure water, rivers of milk of which the taste does not change, rivers of wine which gives delight and rivers of purified honey which will be given to the righteous in plenty.

Worldly waters become polluted by getting mixed with earth, vegetation and other adulterating substances which make them stink. But in Paradise, there will be rivers having un-pollutable water. The river of pure, clean water that will not go bad in taste, smell or colour, (and will flow uninterruptedly without layers of dregs, scum or any other unpleasant- looking substances).

Milk, in this world, is secreted by the mammary glands of female mammals, such as the cow's udders or the breasts of the human female, and soon it starts to deteriorate. In Paradise it will flow in rivers and the Heavenly milk will never be spoilt. Its taste will be eternally delicious, relishing and delightful.

Worldly wine has a foul smell and a bitter taste, (though the ones

addict to it do not feel its bitterness, being accustomed to it). But the Heavenly wine will give endless delight to the drinker. In Sūrah As-Ṣāffāt [37:47] the Qur'ān describes the Heavenly wine as لَافِيْهَا غَوْلٌ وَّ لَاهُمْ عَنْهَا يُنْزَفُوْنَ : "which has no headache in it, nor from it will they be intoxicated."

Honey, in this world, is the secretion derived principally from the nectaries of flowers, from which it is extracted by bees in the form of nectar and deposited in their honey-sacs, where it undergoes a certain change prior to storage in the cells of the comb. When it is ripe, that is, it has become sufficiently thick by evaporation, it may now be extracted or thrown from the honey-comb by centrifugal force or by gravity. When it is so extracted, it needs to be clarified of the accompanying particles of wax, scum and other unwanted substances. However, the honey in Paradise will be pure and clean and will be available amply, as rivers of honey will flow uninterruptedly without layers of dregs, scum or any other unpleasant-looking substances.

All four kinds of rivers - of water, milk, wine and honey - are used in their primary senses. There is no need to apply them unnecessarily in their figurative sense. However, it is obvious that the bounties of Paradise cannot be compared to things of this world. The taste and quality of the bounties of Paradise will be unique and can only be experienced in the gardens of Paradise.

Verses 16 - 18

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّسْتَمِعُ اِلَيْكَ حَتّٰىٓ اِذَا خَرَجُوْا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ
اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ اٰنِفًا قف اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ طَبَعَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ
وَاتَّبَعُوْٓا اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ﴿۱۶﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَّاٰتٰىهُمْ تَقْوٰىهُمْ
﴿۱۷﴾ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا السَّاعَةَ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً ج فَقَدْ جَآءَ اَشْرَاطُهَا ج
فَاَنّٰى لَهُمْ اِذَا جَآءَتْهُمْ ذِكْرٰىهُمْ ﴿۱۸﴾

And among them there are ones who (pretend to) give ear to you, until when they go out from your presence, they say to those who have been given knowledge, "What

did he say just now?" Those are the ones on whose hearts Allah has put a seal, and they have followed their desires. [16] **As for those who have adopted right path, Allah improves them in guidance, and gives them their piety.** [17] **They are waiting for nothing but the Hour that it should come upon them suddenly. So, its signs have already come. Then, once it will come upon them, how would they have an opportunity to accept the advice (already) given to them?** [18]

Commentary

The lexical item اشراط *"ashrāṭ"* occurring in this passage means "signs". The portents of the last Hour starts with the very advent of Khatam-un-Nabiyyin [the Last of the Holy Prophets] as the end of the Holy Prophethood is the sign of the approach of the last Hour. The miracle of the splitting of the moon by the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been described thus in the Holy Qur'ān [54:1]: اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ "The hour has drawn near and the moon has split." - indicating that this miracle is also one of the signs of the last Hour. These are initial portents of the Hour which appeared at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān. Besides, there are many other portents that have been predicted in authentic Aḥādīth, one of which is reported by Anas رضي الله عنه in which he says that I have heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: "Among the signs of the last hour is the removal of knowledge, abundance of ignorance, the prevalence of fornication, the prevalence of wine-drinking, the small number of men and the large number of women so that fifty women will have one man to look after them". (Bukhari and Muslim) A version has "knowledge will dwindle and ignorance will be widespread."

Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reports Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying: "When the spoils of war are taken as personal wealth, property given in trust is treated as spoil, *zakāh* is treated as a fine, learning is acquired for other than religious purpose, a man obeys his wife and is undutiful towards his mother, brings his friend near and drives his father far off, voices are raised in the mosques, the most wicked member of a tribe becomes its ruler, the most worthless member of a people becomes its leader, a man is honored through fear of the evil he may do, singing-girls and stringed-instruments make their appearance, wines are drunk, and the last members of this community curse the earlier ones, look at that time for a violent wind, an earthquake, being swallowed up by the earth,

metamorphosis, pelting rain, and signs following one another like bits of a necklace falling one after the other when its string is cut. (Tirmidhi)

Verse 19

فَاعْلَمْ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْۢبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوٰىكُمْ ﴿۱۹﴾

So, know for sure that there is no god but Allah, and seek forgiveness for your fault, and for (the faults of) the believing men and believing women. And Allah knows your moving from place to place and your permanent abode. [19]

Commentary

In this verse the address is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and he is, through an imperative verb, commanded to know that there is no object of worship besides Allah. It is quite obvious that every Muslim has the knowledge of this - let alone the leader of the Holy Prophets ﷺ who should have its knowledge more profoundly. Then why is he enjoined to acquire this knowledge? There can be two responses to this question: it can either mean that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is enjoined to be steadfast in his worship of Allah or it could mean that he must fulfill the demands of his knowledge. Qurṭubī cites the incident of Sufyān Ibn 'Uyaynah رحمه الله تعالى who was asked about the significance of knowledge, he replied: Did you not read verse 19 of Sūrah Muḥammad: فَاعْلَمْ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْۢبِكَ "So, know for sure (O Holy Prophet ﷺ) that there is no god but Allah, and seek forgiveness for your fault. It is required in this verse that knowledge should be acquired before action. Similarly, on other occasions in the Qur'ān, first it is enjoined to acquire knowledge and then to fulfil its corresponding demands. For example, in [57:20] the Holy Qur'ān has said, اِعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَّلَهْوٌ "Know that the present life is but a sport and a diversion ..." Then it was said, سَابِقُوْٓا اِلٰى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ "Race to forgiveness from your Lord (57:21)". In Sūrah Anfāl, (verse) the Qur'ān says: وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَآ اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَاَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ .

"Know that your wealth and children are a trial..." The demand of this knowledge is mentioned in Sūrah At-Taghābun (Verse 14): فَاحْذَرُوْهُمْ "...so be fearful of Him.". Thus on these occasions first the knowledge of

different things are imparted, and then it is enjoined to fulfil the demands of that knowledge.

In this context, although the Holy Prophet ﷺ had prior knowledge of the Oneness of Allah, the injunction here is for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to fulfil the demand of this fundamental knowledge, that is, "وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ and ask forgiveness for your faults (47:19)". The Holy Prophet ﷺ is infallible and immune from sin, and therefore the possibility that he would commit sins is unthinkable. Despite this, the possibility of Allah's Holy Prophets ﷺ committing misjudgment in *Ijtihād* cannot be ruled out. But, according to the sacred law, such mistakes are not regarded as sins. In fact, they are rewarded, though the prophets عليهم السلام are told about the correct position, and keeping in view the high status of the prophets, such mistakes too are sometimes referred to as "*dhanb*" (fault or sin), as for instance in Sūrah 'Abasa [80] the Holy Prophets] was criticized for his misjudgment. The details will be set out when discussing that Sūrah. The error of judgement referred to in that Sūrah was not really a sin. In fact, a reward was promised to him for that, but because it was not in conformity with his high status, Allah Ta'ālā expressed His dislike. This type of "*dhanb*" (fault) is referred to in the current verse.

Note

Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq ؓ reports that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: Recite لا اله الا الله *lā-ilāha-illallāh* and استغفار *istighfār* frequently because Iblīs (Satan) says, 'I got people involved in sins and destroyed them, but they destroyed me by reciting *illallāh*, so I got them involved in false and baseless thoughts and notions which they pursue as true, authentic and righteous, (for instance, the common religious innovations (*bid'āt*), because they treat them as righteous,) hence, they do not feel any need to repent for their practice of innovations.

مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوٰىكُمْ, last line (your moving from place to place and your permanent abode.) The word مُتَقَلَّب *mutaqallab* lexically means "turning around or turning over". The word *mathwā* means "permanent resting place ". It is open to several interpretations. As a result, the commentators have assigned different meanings to the phrase. As a matter of fact, all the meanings attached to the phrase are correct, sound, authentic and true, because human beings are confronted by two types of conditions: in

the one case their involvement in something is temporary, and in the other case it is permanent. Likewise, in some places man's stay is temporary and in other places it is permanent. In the concluding phrase of the current verse, the word مُتَقَلَّب *mutaqallab* has been used to describe "temporary" and مَثْوٰى *mathwā* is used to describe "permanent". Thus this verse signifies that Allah is fully aware of all conditions of human beings.

Verses 20 - 31

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَتْ سُورَةٌ ۚ فَاِذَآ اُنْزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ مُّحْكَمَةٌ
وَّذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ ۙ رَاَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ يَّنْظُرُونَ اِلَيْكَ
نَظَرَ الْمَغْشِيِّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ؕ فَاَوْلٰى لَهُمْ ﴿٢٠﴾ طَاعَةٌ وَّقَوْلٌ
مَّعْرُوفٌ ۟ فَاِذَا عَزَمَ الْاَمْرُ ۟ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللّٰهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ﴿٢١﴾
فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ اِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ اَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوٓا اَرْحَامَكُمْ
﴿٢٢﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ فَاَصَمَّهُمْ وَاَعْمٰٓى اَبْصَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٣﴾
اَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْاٰنَ اَمْ عَلٰى قُلُوبٍ اَقْفَالُهَا ﴿٢٤﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدُّوا
عَلٰٓى اَدْبَارِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَى ۙ الشَّيْطٰنُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ ؕ
وَاَمْلٰى لَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ اللّٰهُ
سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْاَمْرِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ اِسْرَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَكَيْفَ اِذَا
تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَاَدْبَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٧﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمُ
اتَّبَعُوا مَآ اَسْخَطَ اللّٰهَ وَكَرِهُوا رِضْوَانَهٗ فَاَحْبَطَ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٢٨﴾ اَمْ
حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ اَنْ لَّنْ يُّخْرِجَ اللّٰهُ اَضْغَانَهُمْ ﴿٢٩﴾
وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَاَرَيْنٰكَهُمْ فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيْمٰهُمْ ؕ وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ
الْقَوْلِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ اَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتّٰى نَعْلَمَ
الْمُجٰهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصّٰبِرِينَ ۙ وَنَبْلُوَا اَخْبَارَكُمْ ﴿٣١﴾

And the believers say, "Why has a (new) *sūrah* not been revealed?" Then, once an operative *sūrah* is sent down, and fighting (in Allah's way) is mentioned in it, you notice those who have disease in their hearts, looking to you like one who is faint because of death. So, destruction is very close to them. [20] **The (reality of their) obedience and (truthfulness of their) speech is fully known (as being mere deception). So, had they been truthful to Allah, once the matter had become serious, it would have been much better for them.** [21] **So, (O hypocrites,) do you not apprehend that, in case you turn away (from Jihād), you will spread disorder in the land, and will sever your ties of kinship? Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed; so He has made them deaf, and made their eyes blind.** [23] **Then, do they not give serious thought to the Qur'ān, or do they have locks on their hearts?** [24] **Surely those who turn back after the guidance has appeared to them clearly, it is Satan who has tempted them and involved them in far-fetched fancies.** [25] **That is because they say to those who hate that which Allah has revealed, "We will obey you in some respects." And Allah knows their secret talk.** [26] **So, how (will it be) when the angels will exact their souls, smiting their faces and their backs.** [27] **That is because they followed that which has angered Allah, and they disliked His pleasure; therefore He has nullified their deeds.** [28] **Do those having disease in their hearts rather think that Allah will never expose their grudges (against Islam)?** [29] **And if We will, We would show them to you, so as you would definitely recognize them by their features. And (still) you will recognize them by the tone of (their) speech. And Allah knows (all) your deeds.** [30] **And We will certainly test you until We know those of you who carry out Jihād (struggle in Allah's way) and observe patience, and until We check the reports about you.** [31]

Commentary

سُورَةٌ مُّحْكَمَةٌ (an operative *sūrah*): The word مُّحْكَمَةٌ *muḥkamah* lexically means "firm". In this lexical sense, every *sūrah* is *muḥkam,* but here it is used in its technical sense. In the technical parlance of the sacred law, the term *muḥkam* is used as an antonym of *mansūkh,* ("abrogated"). Here the word Sūrah has been qualified by the adjective *muḥkamah* so that the eagerness of the believers for a new Sūrah is understandable only when it embodies an operative divine commandment that is not abrogated.

Qatādah ﷺ says that all Sūrahs which contain the injunctions of *Jihād* and *Qitāl* are operative and not abrogated. As the main objective of this Sūrah is to enjoin fighting and to persuade people to carry out the injunction, the adjectival phrase is: Sūrah *muḥkamah* - indicating the injunction of *Jihād*. (Qurtubi)

اَوْلٰى لَهُمْ (So, destruction is very close to them - 47:20] The Arabic word used in the text, according to Asma'ī, means that the causes of destruction have approached or drawn near to them (Qurtubi).

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ اِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ اَنْ تُفْسِدُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوْٓا اَرْحَامَكُمْ (So, [O hypocrites,] do you not apprehend that, in case you turn away (from *Jihād*), you will spread disorder in the land, and will sever your ties of kinship? - 47:22). The word تَوَلّٰى *'tawalla'* used in the text lexically has two senses: it could mean *I'rāḍ*, that is, "turning away" and it could also mean to be placed in authority over the people. Some of the commentators of the Qur'ān assigned the first meaning to this word in the context of this verse, and Abū Ḥayyān in his Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ prefers this interpretation, (and the translation given above is based on it.) From this point of view the meaning of the verse would be: If you turned away from Jihād [struggling in the cause of Allah] and other injunctions of Sharī'ah, you would return to the ancient system of ignorance which Islam has abolished. In the Pre-Islamic Days, according to the practices of *jāhiliyyah*, for centuries they caused corruption and severed ties of kinship. For example, they practiced injustice; they cut each other's throat; one tribe attacked another tribe; they committed carnage and massacre; and they buried alive their daughters with their own hands. Islam abolished and wiped out all these and other heinous practices of the Days of Ignorance. In order to wipe out these heinous crimes of those days, Islam enjoined Jihād which apparently seems to be bloodshed, but in reality it is analogous to amputation of the diseased limb of a body, so that the rest of the body may remain healthy. Jihād establishes justice and equity and maintains ties of kinship and relationship.

Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Qurṭubī and others take the second meaning of the word *tawallī* in this context, that is, to be placed in authority over people. From this point of view, the meaning of the verse would be: if your ambitions of being placed in authority over people and the affairs of the world are entrusted to you whilst you are morally unhealthy, you would

cause corruption in the land and cut off ties of kinship and relationship.

Strict Maintenance of Kinship Ties

The word أَرْحَام 'arḥām' is the plural of رَحِم 'raḥīm' (womb). This is a receptacle or repository in the mother where the young humans are conceived, held, protected and developed before birth. Because that is the source of all relationships and kinship, it is idiomatically used in the sense of human relationship and kinship. Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, on this occasion, has explained in detail the relations covered by the term *dhawil arḥām* or *arḥām*. Islam has laid great stress on fulfilling the rights of relationship. Bukhārī records a Ḥadīth on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ and two other Companions to the effect that whoever maintains good relations with the kith and kin Allah will keep good relations with him, but whoever severs his bonds of kinship, Allah too will sever His relations with him. This Ḥadīth indicates how important it is to treat relatives kindly in terms of words, deeds and wealth. In the same Ḥadīth, Abū Hurairah ﷺ refers to the verse under discussion [47:22] and says "Read it if you wish to". In another Tradition, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that there is a sin for which one will be punished, not only in the Hereafter, but also in this world, that is, ... breaking kinship bonds. In Thawbān ﷺ Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Whoever wishes to have his life prolonged and his sustenance blessed should treat his relatives kindly." We come across the following Ḥadīth in Bukhārī:

ليس الواصل بالمكافى ولكنّ الواصل الذى اذا قطعت رحمه وصلها

> "The person who perfectly maintains the ties of kinship is not the one who does it because he gets recompensed by his relatives for being kind and good to them, but the one who truly maintains the bonds of kinship is he who treats his kinsmen fairly, even though others have severed the ties of kinship with him." (Ibn Kathīr)

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ (Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed - 47:23) In other words, people who cause corruption in the land and break bonds of kinship have been cursed by Allah, that is, Allah has driven them away from His mercy. On the basis of this verse, Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ regarded the sale of *ummul-walad* unlawful. *Ummul-walad* is a term used in Islamic law for a female slave who has borne a child to her master, and

who is consequently free at his death. Thus the sale of the mother would result in separating the child from the mother, and this would lead to severing kinship tie between mother and child which necessitates the curse of Allah. Therefore, the sale of *ummul-walad* was declared unlawful [23].

Law Relating to Cursing a Particular Person: The Issue of Cursing Yazīd

When 'Abdullāh asked his father Imām Aḥmad about the permissibility of cursing Yazīd, the Imām replied: "Why should we not curse a person whom Allah has cursed in the Qur'ān?" 'Abdullāh said that he read the Qur'ān in its entirety but he did not find Yazīd is cursed anywhere. The father recited the present verse and said, 'Who could be worse than Yazīd in breaking up relationships? He did not even care for the Holy Prophet's ﷺ relations.' However, majority of the Ummah hold the view that it is not permissible to curse any particular person unless we know for sure that he died in the state of disbelief. We can nevertheless use cursing phrase with general characteristics, such as curse of Allah be upon the liars, curse of Allah be upon the mischief-makers, and curse of Allah be upon the breaker of kinship]. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī on this occasion has discussed this issue elaborately.

اَمْ عَلٰى قُلُوْبٍ اَقْفَالُهَا (or do they have locks on their hearts? - 47:24) The meaning of this phrase is synonymous with similar phrases in other verses of the Qur'ān where words like *khatm* or *ṭab'* "[Allah] has set a seal [on their hearts] have been used to describe how the disbelievers refuse to employ their hearts for the comprehension of truth, as a natural consequence their capacities to distinguish right from wrong have become atrophied. Carelessly, committing sins all the time is the main cause of this. Allah forbid!

اَلشَّيْطٰنُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ ۭ وَاَمْلٰى لَهُمْ (it is Satan who has tempted them and involved them in far-fetched fancies. - 47:25). In this sentence, two acts have been ascribed to the devil: - *taswīl* [meaning the act of decking out evil works fair to some people, and *imlā'* meaning the act of giving respite. First, he made their evil works look good and beautiful to them, and then prolonged their false hopes which will never be fulfilled.

اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ اَنْ لَّنْ يُّخْرِجَ اللّٰهُ اَضْغَانَهُمْ (Do those having disease in

their hearts rather think that Allah will never expose their grudges [against Islam]? - 47:29)" The word *aḍghān* is the plural of *ḍighn* which means secret enmity, rancour, malice or spite. This verse was revealed in connection with hypocrites to expose their bitter hatred and rancour against Islam which they were hiding in their hearts. Outwardly, they expressed their love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and inwardly they harbored violent hatred and enmity for him. They knew that Allah is the knower of the unseen, yet they were not concerned that He would expose their inner secret and covert enmity to the people. Ibn Kathīr says in Sūrah Barā'ah that Allah has described their works, actions and activities which expose their hypocrisy and they would be identified as hypocrites. Therefore, another name of that Sūrah is *fāḍiḥah* meaning exposing to shame or disgrace, because specific qualities of the hypocrites are set out in it.

وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَاَرَيْنٰكَهُمْ فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيْمٰهُمْ (And if We will, We would show them to you, so as you would definitely recognize them by their features - 47:30). In other words, if Allah wishes, He could pinpoint and define precisely who the hypocrites are and describe their features so that the Holy Prophet ﷺ could identify each hypocrite personally. Grammatically, the Qur'ān has introduced this clause by the hypothetical particle *lau* "if". Thus introduced, the sentence implies that what is supposed either does not occur or is not likely to take place. From this point of view, the clause implies that if Allah had willed, He would have pinpointed every hypocrite to you personally, but His wisdom and clemency did not wish to expose them to shame and disgrace in this way, and thus maintain the principle that all worldly matters be decided by their outer appearance, and the inner conditions and matters of the heart be left to the All-Knowing Allah. However, Allah has given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ the insight, so that he is able to perceive into the inner nature and real character of the hypocrites by the style of their speech. This is the meaning of وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِىْ لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ "... And (still) you will recognize them by the tone of (their) speech. - 47:30]...". (Ibn Kathir)

Sayyidnā 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān رضي الله عنه says that anyone who conceals a secret in his heart, Allah displays it on his face, and brings it out by the slip of his tongue. In other words, in the course of conversation, some such words slip out which express their inner secrets. Likewise there is a Ḥadīth which reports that any person harboring a secret thought in his

heart, Allah puts a cover on it; if it is good, it becomes manifest, and if it is evil, that too becomes manifest. Some narrations of *aḥādīth* have described that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was imparted the knowledge of a group of the hypocrites by name. For example, it is recorded in Musnad of Imām Aḥmad on the authority of 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amr ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ in one of his sermons called out the names of particular hypocrites and asked them to leave the congregation. Thirty-six names were counted altogether. (Ibn Kathir)

حَتّٰى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجٰهِدِيْنَ مِنْكُمْ (...until We know those of you who carry out Jihād,... - 47:31) Allah's knowledge of every person's works and deeds is all-encompassing and eternal. It may be noted here that knowledge is of two kinds: [i] a *priori* knowledge or fore-knowledge, knowledge about a thing before its occurrence; and [ii] a *posteriori* knowledge or -in Mariam knowledge, knowledge about a thing after it has actually happened. Here knowledge refers to the second category. Allah's knowledge of things is since eternity. In this context, the knowledge about things is a *posteriori*, after the occurrence of the events in the external world. (Ibn Kathir) (The purport of this part of the verse is that Allah has enjoined fighting on the believers so that sincere believers may become distinguished from the hypocrites who shrink in horror at the very thought of fighting). Allah knows best.

Verses 32 - 38

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَشَآقُّوا الرَّسُوْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَاتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدٰى لا لَنْ يَّضُرُّوا اللّٰهَ شَيْئًا ط وَسَيُحْبِطُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ
﴿٣٢﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوْٓا
اَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوْا
وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يَّغْفِرَ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَلَا تَهِنُوْا وَتَدْعُوْٓا اِلَى السَّلْمِ صلے ق
وَاَنْتُمُ الْاَعْلَوْنَ وَاللّٰهُ مَعَكُمْ وَلَنْ يَّتِرَكُمْ اَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٥﴾ اِنَّمَا
الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَّلَهْوٌ ط وَاِنْ تُؤْمِنُوْا وَتَتَّقُوْا يُؤْتِكُمْ اُجُوْرَكُمْ وَلَا
يَسْئَلْكُمْ اَمْوَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٦﴾ اِنْ يَّسْئَلْكُمُوْهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ تَبْخَلُوْا وَيُخْرِجْ

اَضْغَانَكُمْ ﴿٣٧﴾ هٰٓاَنْتُمْ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنْفِقُوْا فِىْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۚ
فَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يَّبْخَلُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّبْخَلْ فَاِنَّمَا يَبْخَلُ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
الْغَنِىُّ وَاَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَآءُ ۚ وَاِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ۙ ثُمَّ لَا
يَكُوْنُوْٓا اَمْثَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٨﴾

Those who disbelieve and prevent (others) from Allah's way, and oppose the Messenger, after the Guidance has appeared to them clearly, shall never bring harm to Allah in the least, and He will render their deeds vain. [32] **O those who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and do not nullify your deeds.** [33] **Those who disbelieve and prevent (others) from Allah's way, then die as unbelievers, Allah will never forgive them.** [34] **So, do not lose heart, and do not appeal for peace; you will be the uppermost, and Allah is with you; and He will never deprive you of your deeds.** [35] **The worldly life is but play and pastime. And if you believe and be God-fearing, He will give you your rewards, and will not ask you your riches.** [36] **If He were to ask you of it, and were to press you, you would show miserliness, and He would expose your grudges.** [37] **Yes, you are such that you are called upon to spend in Allah's way, but some of you withhold in miserliness_ and he who withholds in miserliness withholds against himself_ and Allah is the Need-Free, and you are the needy. And if you turn away, He will replace you by some other people, then they will not be like you.** [38]

Commentary

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ (Those who disbelieve and prevent (others) from Allah's way ... - 47:32) This verse also refers to the hypocrites, and the Jewish tribes of Banū Quraiẓah and Banū Naḍīr. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that this verse refers to those hypocrites who, on the occasion of the battle of Badr, joined forces with the infidels of Quraysh and helped them in such a way that twelve men of the two tribes took upon themselves the responsibility of feeding the entire army. Each one of the twelve men took turns to organize meal for the enemy camp on different days.

وَسَيُحْبِطُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ (...and He will render their deeds vain - 47:32)

Ḥabt-ul-a'māl (rendering deeds vain) could have one of the two meanings: [i] their efforts to undermine Islam would be unsuccessful and fail as explained in the foregoing commentary of this verse; and [ii] on account of their disbelief and hypocrisy, their good deeds - such as charity , free will offerings, philanthropic activities and so on - will all be rendered void and will not be acceptable.

لَاتُبْطِلُوْٓا اَعْمَالَكُمْ (... and do not nullify your deeds... - 47:33) Here the Qur'ān has employed the phrase *ibṭāl-ul-a'māl* instead of *ḥabṭ-ul-a'māl* because the scope of the former phrase is much wider than the latter phrase, because *ibṭāl-ul-a'māl* may be interpreted in two ways: In the one case it takes place on account of disbelief which was described in the foregoing verse by the phrase *ḥabt-ul-a'māl* because no action of a die-hard infidel is ever acceptable on account of disbelief. If anyone embraced Islam and later abandoned it, all his good actions performed during the days of Islam will be rendered vain albeit good works of the days of Islam are acceptable. The good works, in this case, will be made vain because of the subsequent disbelief and apostasy.

The other case of *ibṭāl-ul-a'māl* is that the acceptability of some righteous deeds is sometimes conditional upon other righteous acts. If the condition is not fulfilled, the righteous deeds will be rendered fruitless. For example, for every righteous action to be acceptable, the necessary condition is that it must be performed exclusively and sincerely for Allah. It must not be performed to make an ostentatious display to people. Let us take a few examples of this rule from the Qur'ān: In [98:5] we read:

وَمَآ اُمِرُوْٓا اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ

"They were commanded only to worship Allah, making their submission sincere for Him, (98:5)".

On another occasion in the Qur'ān [39:3] we read:

اَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ

"Unquestionably, for Allah is the pure religion" [39:3].

This goes to show that all good works - to be acceptable - must be done with the sincerity of heart and honesty of purpose. Otherwise they will be rendered void by Allah. On a third occasion in the Qur'ān [2:264] we read: لَاتُبْطِلُوْا صَدَقٰتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْاَذٰى "O those who believe, do not nullify your charities

by boasting about favour, and teasing (2:264)". This shows that giving charity to a needy person and then following it up by demands of gratitude or insulting words or hurting him in some other way will only nullify his charitable act. This probably could be the meaning of what Ḥasan Baṣrī has said when interpreting this verse: "Do not render vain your own good works by means of sins." Although the apparent sense of this statement is that if one commits a sin, all his good deeds are nullified, yet this being against the well-established position, its real purpose cannot be other than it refers only to those sins that are relevant to a particular virtuous act and which nullify that particular act only. It is similar to what Ibn Jurayj has said to explain this verse: "(Do not nullify your virtuous acts) by doing them only to show off and to win a good name among the people." Likewise, Muqātil and others have explained it by saying: *bil-manni,* that is, (Do not nullify your deeds) by boasting about your favour. Otherwise, according to the unanimity of *ahl-us-sunnah wal-jamā'ah*, no sin - not even a major sin other than *kufr* or *shirk* -- can destroy the righteous acts of a believer. For example, if a believer, who performs his prayer regularly and keeps his fasts, were to steal something, the sacred law does not declare his prayers and fasts null and void or demand him to repeat them. Therefore, in the statement of Ḥasan Baṣrī the word 'sins' refers only to those sins refraining from which is a necessary condition for the acceptability of good works. For example, the acceptability of good works, it is necessary to refrain from *riyā'*, that is, to avoid showing off or making an ostentatious display of accomplishments. Moreover, it is also possible that Ḥasan Baṣrī statement regarding refers to the deprivation of the blessings of righteous works, and not to the absolute nullification of a righteous work itself. This may apply to all types of sin in the sense that if a believer's sins are much more than his good deeds, the few good deeds that he has to his credit will be devoid of the blessing that may save him from the punishment of his sins. According to the rule of retribution, he will be punished first for his sins and finally through the virtue of his faith he will attain salvation and be admitted into the gardens of Paradise.

Ruling:

If a believer starts a *nafl* (an act of worship that is not obligatory), and then deliberately disrupts it before its completion, this too is deemed

by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah as nullifying the deed, and is impermissible according to him. Therefore, if a person commences righteous acts that were initially not compulsory or obligatory, their completion, according to this interpretation of the verse, becomes obligatory. Otherwise he would be committing *ibṭāl-ul-a'māl* [nullification of actions]. If anyone does this without a legitimate reason or nullifies them purposely, he would be a sinner, and it would be obligatory for him to make *qaḍā'* for such nullification. According to Imām Shafi'ī, neither he is a sinner nor is it obligatory for him to make *qaḍā'* . His argument is that the act was not initially compulsory or obligatory, therefore its abandonment or nullification would not entail a sin. Ḥanafīs argue that the wordings of the current verse are general in their scope embracing all righteous acts, whether obligatory or supererogatory. Therefore, if a supererogatory act is initiated, its completion becomes obligatory. On this occasion, in Tafsīr Maẓharī, a large number of *aḥādīth* are quoted and the issue is discussed in detail.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ (Those who disbelieve and prevent (others) from Allah's way, Allah will never forgive them...- 47:34): verse [32] has a similar warning in similar words. The present verse [34] seems to repeat almost the same warning. But the difference is probably that verse 32 describes the loss of the infidels in this world, and the current verse describes their loss in the next world as indicated in the commentary. It is also possible that in the earlier verse the reference was to infidels in general which included those people who embraced Islam later on. The ruling regarding them was that all the good works which they had done in the state of disbelief would go to waste. Even after embracing Islam they would not be rewarded for them. The current verse refers in particular to those infidels who persisted in their disbelief and idolatry until their dying day. The ruling regarding them is that Allah will never forgive them in the next world. Allah knows best.

فَلَا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلْمِ (So, do not lose heart, and do not appeal for peace;) ... - 47:35". This verse prohibits the Muslims to invite the infidels to enter into peace treaty. But on another occasion in the Qur'ān such a treaty is allowed : وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا "And if they tilt towards peace, you tilt towards it..." (9:61). This verse indicates that if the infidels want peace, it is permissible to enter into peace agreement with them. Therefore, some

scholars think that the permission in this verse is conditional upon the assumption that the infidels take initiative for peace negotiations. The current verse prohibits the Muslims from taking initiative for peace. Thus there is no conflict between the two verses. However, the authentic ruling is that it is permissible for Muslims even to take initiative in negotiating peace with the infidels if it could be in the best interest of the Muslims - not by reason of cowardice and involvement in a life of luxury. The Qur'ān by the employment of the imperative sentence *falā-tahinū* [do not lose heart] in this verse indicates that the prohibition is meant for such an appeal for peace that is based on cowardice and escaping from Jihād. In this case too there is no conflict between the two verses, because the direction of tending to peace in verse 9:61 is restricted to a situation where it is based on the interest of the Muslims, and not on cowardice or leisure. Allah knows best.

وَلَنْ يَّتِرَكُمْ اَعْمَالَكُمْ (...and He will never deprive you of your deeds...47:35) It means that Allah will not diminish the reward of the believers. This indicates that if they were to suffer any pain or loss in this world, they will receive a huge reward in the next world. Thus a believer is never unsuccessful even in the face of pain or difficulty.

اِنَّمَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا (The worldly life is but play and pastime - 47:36.) As Muslims have been enjoined to fight in the cause of Allah, they will, for this purpose, have to make sacrifices of life and money. But the love of this world is the only thing that can prevent man from fighting. In this verse we are told that neither of these mundane benefits is permanent. After all, they all will perish and come to an end. Even if we succeed in saving them for now, they will be lost another time. The bounties of the next world are permanent and eternal: the believers need to develop love for them - not for the perishable things of this ephemeral world.

وَلَا يَسْئَلْكُمْ اَمْوَالَكُمْ (...and will not ask you your riches... 47:36). The apparent meaning of this verse is that Allah does not demand or urge you to hand over your wealth. But the Qur'ān is replete with verses relating to payment of *zakāh*, charities and spending wealth in the way of Allah. Even in the next verse, the reader is emphatically called upon to expend in Allah's way. Thus there appears to be conflict between these verses. Some scholars resolve the conflict by saying that the present verse means that Allah does not need their money for His benefit, but it is for their

own benefit that sacrifices of life and money are demanded of them. Earlier in this very verse, it has been declared expressly: يُؤْتِكُمْ اُجُوْرَكُمْ)...He will give you your rewards, (47:36)". The believers are required to spend in Allah's way which will help them in the Hereafter where they will need their righteous works most pressingly. That is where they will be rewarded. This interpretation of the verse has been preferred by Maulānā Thanawī رحمه الله تعالىٰ. A verse of identical meaning is مَآ اُرِيْدُ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ رِّزْقٍ (I do not desire [to receive] any provision from them, nor do I desire that they should feed Me...51:57)

Other scholars, however, assign another meaning to the words, "and will not ask you your riches". They say that "asking your riches" means to demand all of one's wealth. Their argument is that this clause needs to be read in conjunction with the next verse [37] which says, اِنْ يَّسْـَٔلْكُمُوْهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ (If He were to ask you of it, and were to press you,...) the word *yuḥfi* is derived from *iḥfā'* which means to pursue a work persistently and insistently until it is accomplished. All scholars agree that the meaning of verse [37] is that if Allah demands for all of their wealth, they would become niggardly and acting upon this injunction would displease them. This displeasure would become visible at the time of expending. To sum up: the meaning of verse [36] is the same as verse [37]. The general meaning of the former verse is restricted by the latter verse. The meaning of these two verses is as follows: The pecuniary obligations, such as *zakāh*, that Allah has imposed on the believers is for their own benefit - Allah does not need their money or wealth. Further, Allah, through His grace and compassion, has imposed a nominal percentage for expending. For example, only 1/40th = 2.5% for *zakāh*, 1/10th = 10% or 1/20th = 5% for agricultural produce, and one goat out of every hundred goats, have been imposed. Thus it is clear that Allah is not demanding for all of our wealth because that would be displeasing and a burden and it would weigh heavily on us. In fact, He has asked for so little of our wealth that we should discharge our obligation readily and happily. The concluding clause in verse [37] يُخْرِجْ اَضْغَانَكُمْ "...you would show miserliness, and He would expose your grudges." contains the word *aḍghān* which is the plural of *ḍighn*. It refers to secret malice, grudge or hatred. Naturally, man feels unhappy to part with all of his wealth. Even if he does not express his unhappiness openly, he would procrastinate at the time of

payment. Procrastination would disclose his unhappiness. In short, if Allah had demanded from people all of their wealth, they would be tight-fisted and because of tight-fistedness their hearts will harbor rancour, malice and spite against spending in the cause of Allah which would be exposed. Therefore, He has imposed upon their wealth a small and nominal percentage to expend in the cause of Allah, but people are niggardly even in this case. This is what the Qur'ān says in the last verse: تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَمِنكُم مَّن يَبْخَلُ "... you are called upon to spend in Allah's way, but some of you withhold in miserliness.". Further the verse reads: وَمَن يَبْخَلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخَلُ عَن نَّفْسِهِ (and he who withholds in miserliness withholds against himself - 47:38) it means that any person practising miserliness will himself suffer loss or detriment because he will have to carry the burden of failing to fulfil his obligation and thus will be deprived of reward in the Hereafter. This point is made even more clear by saying "_ and Allah is the Need-Free, and you are the needy." In other words, Allah is free of want and beyond any need but man is in need of means of comfortable subsistence. So spending in the way of Allah is for man's own good and to fulfil his own needs.

وَإِن تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُم : (...And if you turn away, He will replace you by some other people, then they will not be like you. - 47:38) This verse has explained that Allah is the most need-free of all. This attribute is described so lucidly that it brings to our mind the fact that let alone people's wealth, He does not even need their existence. If they stop acting upon His injunctions, He will bring another people who will not turn away from the sacred injunctions, but will obey Him completely as long as Allah wants to maintain the religion of truth, Islam. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī says that the reference in this verse is to non-Arabs and Sayyidnā 'Ikramah says that the reference is to Persians and Romans. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ reports that when Allah's Messenger recited this verse in the presence of the Companions ﷺ they asked him: "Who are those people that will be brought instead of us if we, God forbid, turn away from Allah'a injunctions and those people will not turn away like us?" Sayyidnā Salmān Fārisī ﷺ was sitting among the Companions رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین, the Holy Prophet ﷺ slapped on his thigh and said: "If Faith [i.e. the religion of truth] were to go up to the Pleiads [accessibility to which is difficult], a man of Persian descent will acquire it from there and

act upon it." .

Shaikh Jalāl-ud-Dīn Suyūṭī wrote a book on the biography of Abū Ḥanīfah where he identifies him and his disciples as being the people referred to in the Ḥadīth quoted earlier, because no group among the Persians reached that high point of knowledge where Abū Ḥanīfah and his disciples reached .

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
The Sūrah Muḥammad
ends here.

Sūrah Al-Fatḥ

(The Victory)

Sūrah Al-Fatḥ was revealed in Madīnah. It has 29 Verses and 4 Sections.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١﴾ لِّيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنبِكَ وَمَا
تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢﴾ وَيَنصُرَكَ
اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيزًا ﴿٣﴾

Surely, We have granted you an open victory, [1] **so that Allah may forgive you of your previous and subsequent faults, and may complete His favour upon you, and may guide you to a straight path,** [2] **and so that Allah may support you with a mighty support.** [3]

Preliminary Remarks

According to the consensus of scholarly opinion of Ṣaḥābah (Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ), Tabi'īn (Pupils of *ṣaḥābah*) and the leading authorities on Qur'ānic commentary, the Sūrah was revealed when, after signing the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was on his way back to Madīnah, in the 6th year of Hijrah in the month of Dhul Qa'dah. In other words, the Holy Prophet ﷺ with a party of his Companions set out for Makkah with the intention of performing the 'Umrah. When he approached the sanctuary of Makkah he halted at a place called Ḥudaibiyah.

The Quraish, however, debarred his entry into Makkah. Later they were willing to compromise that he must go back home that year and make up for the missed 'Umrah the following year. Many companions, especially Sayyidnā 'Umar ﵁, were greatly upset but the Holy Prophet ﷺ accepted it under Divine direction because he felt that this would pave the way to Muslim success. The details are set out later in the Sūrah. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ put off his *Iḥrām*, this Sūrah was revealed on his return journey from Ḥudaibiyah in which it is pointed out that his vision is true which will most certainly be fulfilled at the appropriate time. But this is not the right time for it. It will happen after the conquest of Makkah. The Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah in this Sūrah is described as "an open victory" because this Treaty was in fact the forerunner of the conquest of Makkah. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﵁ and some other Companions say "you think the conquest of Makkah is 'Victory'" but we regard "The very Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah as the real 'Victory'". Likewise Sayyidnā Jābir ﵁ says "We think the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah is 'Victory'". Barā' Ibn 'Āzib says "You think 'Victory' refers to the conquest of Makkah. No doubt, it does, but we think the Pledge of Riḍwān on the occasion of Ḥudaibiyah is the real 'Victory' where the Companions [some 1400] were asked by the Holy Prophet ﷺ under an acacia tree to declare on solemn oath that they would stand by him at all costs and would fight under his banner to the bitter end. The Pledge of *Jihād* is referred to later on in this Sūrah. (Ibn Kathīr) As mentioned earlier, this Sūrah was revealed on the occasion of Ḥudaibiyah, and since some parts of this incident are referred to in this Sūrah, it seems pertinent to first give details of this incident. Tafsīr Ibn Kathir elaborates on the event and gives many small details. Tafsīr Maẓharī develops it even more elaborately. He has, on this occasion, written about fourteen pages, narrating the story from the beginning to the end with reference to authentic collections of Ḥadīth. The narrative comprises many miracles, pieces of advice, and educational, religious and political points of wisdom. We intend to give the details of those parts of the narrative which are referred to in the Sūrah itself, or are profoundly relevant to the Sūrah, so that it may facilitate the understanding of those verses which are related to the incident. The details given below are mainly adopted from Tafsīr Maẓharī, and reference is made to other commentaries from where other details are taken.

The Event of Ḥudaibiyah:

Ḥudaibiyah is a plain situated outside Makkah on the way to Jeddah which is very close to the boundaries of Ḥaram. It is now called *Shumaisiyy*. This is the site where the incident took place.

Part [1]: The Prophet's ﷺ Vision

It is reported by Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid, Baihaqī, and others that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw in a dream in Madīnah that he had gone to Makkah with his Companions, entered it peacefully and performed the 'Umrah (shorter pilgrimage). He and his Companions put off their pilgrim-garb and, according to the rule, some had their heads shaven and others had their hair cut short. The Holy Prophet ﷺ then entered the House of Allah, and the key of the House fell into his hand. This part of the event is referred to later on in this Sūrah [48:27]. The dream of the Prophets علیہم السلام is not a mere dream or fiction. It is a Divine revelation, acting upon which is necessary. Therefore, this vision of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not merely a dream, but a Divine inspiration which he had to strictly obey and follow. However, no time or date was specified for this. In fact, this vision was to be fulfilled at the time of the conquest of Makkah. But when the Holy Prophet ﷺ narrated this vision to his companions, they in their enthusiasm to visit Makkah and perform the *ṭawāf* (circumambulation) of the House, started preparations forthwith. When a party of the Companions was in full readiness to depart, the Holy Prophet ﷺ too made up his mind to accomplish his vision, since no time or date was specified, it is possible, he thought, that this purpose could be achieved instantly (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān, citing from Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

Part [2]: The Prophet ﷺ Invites his Companions and Bedouins to Join him: Some refused

It is reported on the authority of Ibn Sa'd and others that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions made up their mind to perform *'umrah,* the Holy Prophet ﷺ had the apprehension that the pagans of Makkah might hinder them from performing *'umrah,* and it was possible also that an armed clash might ensue. Therefore, he invited people from the neighbouring villages to join him for the pilgrimage. Many of the village bedouins refused to join him claiming that Muḥammad ﷺ and his Companions wanted to push them into the jaws of death. They said that Muḥammad and his Companions wanted to get them into an armed clash

with Makkans who were superior to them in terms of weapons and power. They felt that as a result of this superiority, the Muslims would not come back alive (Maẓharī).

Part [3]: Setting out for Makkah

According to the versions of Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, Nasa'ī and others the Holy Prophet ﷺ before setting out for the journey, took a bath, put on his new clothes and mounted his camel Qaṣwā'. He was accompanied by his blessed wife 'Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها. A large number of the *Muhājirīn*, *Anṣār* and the village folks was with him. This constituted, according to most versions, 1400 people altogether. No one doubted that Makkah will be conquered on that day on account of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ vision, whereas they did not have any weapons except swords. The Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions set out for this journey on Monday at the beginning of Dhul-Qa'dah. He reached Dhul-Ḥulaifah and donned the pilgrim-robe with the intention of 'Umrah (Shorterned from Maẓharī).

Part [4] : Preparing for Confrontation with Makkans

When the people of Makkah received news about the Prophet's ﷺ journey to Makkah with a large number of his Companions, they gathered together, and expressed their concern that if Muḥammad was allowed entry into Makkah, the entire Arabia would be under the impression that the Makkans were subdued by him, while several battles had been fought between them and Muḥammad. As such, they were not willing to allow him entry into the city. Thus they dispatched an advance cavalry towards Kura'-ul-Ghamīm under the command of Khālid Ibn Walīd رضي الله عنه [who until then was not a Muslim] to intercept him. The neighboring villagers were also attached to the cavalry, and the tribe of Banū Thaqīf from Ṭā'if joined them as well. They pitched their tents in a place called Baldaḥ. They pledged to debar the Holy Prophet ﷺ from entering into Makkah and to declare war against him.

A Strange and Simple Network of Communication

The enemies set up a network of communication from Baldaḥ to the place where the Holy Prophet ﷺ had reached. They placed a few men on the top of each mountain to observe the movement, activity and position of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and inform the people on the adjacent mountain in a loud voice, they in turn relayed the message to the people on the next

mountain, they would then convey the information to the third mountain, and so on. In this way they communicated the details of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ activities to the people of Baldah within a few minutes.

The Informants of Holy Prophet ﷺ

The Holy Prophet ﷺ dispatched Bishr Ibn Sufyān ؓ to Makkah in advance as a secret informer, so that he may secretly observe the activities and movements of the Quraish and keep him fully informed of their intentions and activities. When he returned from Makkah, he informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the Makkans were preparing for an all-out war. The Holy Prophet ﷺ expressed his regret that several wars had already weakened the strength of Quraish, and yet they would not give up fighting. The Prophet ﷺ said: "This was an ideal opportunity for them to leave me and the other Arabs alone. If these Arabs had vanquished me, they would have accomplished their objective without any pain; and if I had vanquished them, one of two things could have happened - either they would have embraced Islam or if they intended to fight me they would have braced themselves to face me. But nobody knows what is wrong with them! By Him who has sent me with His commands, I shall never cease to fight them until my neck is separated from the rest of my body."

Part [5]: The Camel of the Holy Prophet ﷺ Refuses to Move

After that the Holy Prophet ﷺ gathered the people and delivered a sermon in which he consulted them whether they should start the fight against the enemies then and there, or press forward and make forced entry into Makkah, and "if they debar us we shall fight them." Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ and other companions said, " You have come out on a peaceful mission with the intention of visiting the House of Allah, not with the belligerent intention of fighting. Therefore, adhere to your peaceful intention. However, if anyone bars us from entering Makkah, then we shall fight." Sayyidnā Miqdād Ibn Aswad ؓ stood up and said: "O Allah's Messenger! We are not like the children of Israel who would say اِذْهَبْ اَنْتَ وَرَبُّکَ فَقَاتِلَا اِنَّا هٰهُنَا قَاعِدُوْنَ - {5:24} 'So go, you and your Lord, and fight. As for us, we are sitting here'. We shall fight with you at all costs." Having seen the Companions' determination, Allah's Messenger ﷺ responded that they should press forward in the direction of Makkah in the name of Allah. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ approached the Holy City,

and Khālid Ibn Walīd ﷺ and his cavalry noticed them moving forward in the direction of *qiblah*, he arrayed his army into regiments and stood up there like adamantine walls. Allah's Messenger ﷺ appointed 'Abbād Ibn Bishr ﷺ as the commander of a unit that was arrayed in opposition to Khālid Ibn Walīd. In the meanwhile it was time for Ẓuhr Ṣalāh. Sayyidnā Bilāl ﷺ called the *adhān*, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ led the congregation in prayer. Khālid and his cavalry looked on. Later on Khālid Ibn Walīd said: "We lost a golden opportunity to wipe them out whilst they were praying. It does not matter, wait for another time, because soon they will be praying again." But in the meantime Jibra'īl ﷺ brought down the injunction of *Ṣalāt-ul-Khawf*. Having made Allah's Messenger ﷺ aware of their intentions, he was shown how the army should be divided into two groups in times of danger. Allah's Messenger ﷺ followed the direction of the Qur'ān. Each group performed the prayer in alternation. (When one group prayed, it was guarded and protected by the armed regiment who remained on the alert for a possible attack by the enemy. It took its turn when the praying group had finished.)

Part [6] : A Miracle at Ḥudaibiyah

When Allah's Messenger ﷺ was nearing Ḥudaibiyah, the forelegs of his she-camel (named Qaṣwā) slipped and it sat down. The Companions tried to urge it up, but in vain. The Companions thought that Qaṣwā was enraged, but Allah's Messenger ﷺ said that it was no fault of Qaṣwā nor is it its usual habit to do this. In fact, it has been stopped by the same One who had blocked the men of elephant. [Probably Allah's Messenger ﷺ by then had discerned that the time was not up for the fulfillment of his vision.] With this discernment, Allah's Messenger ﷺ declared: "By Him in whose hand is Muḥammad's life, today I shall accept all the demands of the Quraish in which the Symbols sanctified by Allah are held in full esteem." Then he called out the she-camel and it stood up. Allah's Messenger ﷺ moved away from the spot where Khālid Ibn Walīd ﷺ was staying, and stationed himself on the other side of Ḥudaibiyah where there was very little water. Khālid Ibn Walīd and the people of Baldaḥ had occupied the places where water was available in abundance. Here a miracle of Allah's Messenger ﷺ shown by Allah Ta'ālā. At this place there was a well in which very little water trickled. He rinsed his mouth in it, and got one of his arrows pitched therein. As soon as this happened, its

water bubbled almost up to the brim of the well. People on the upper side of the well drew water and quenched their thirst.

Part [7]: Negotiation with the Deputations of the People of Makkah

In this way all the Companions were satisfied and settled there, and started negotiations with the people of Makkah through their deputations. First, Budail Ibn Warqa' [who later on embraced Islam] along with his companions paid a visit to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and informed him, as a well-wisher, that the entire Makkah had come out in full force to confront him. They have occupied all the water spots. "They will never allow you to enter into Makkah." He said. Allah's Messenger ﷺ replied, "We have not come to fight anyone. However, if they block us from performing *'umrah*, we will fight". Then he repeated what he had said to his spy Bishr رضي الله عنه: "Several wars have weakened the Quraish. If they wish, a peace treaty could be arranged for a specified period of time, so that they may peacefully prepare themselves. In the meantime they should leave us and the rest of the Arabs alone. If these Arabs vanquish me, they would have accomplished their objective without any pain; and if I vanquish them, and they started entering into the fold of Islam, then the Quraish will have two options: either they too will embrace Islam, or if they will intend to fight me, they will have braced themselves to face me. But if they refuse this, then I swear by Him who has sent me with His commands, I shall never cease to fight them until my neck is left separated from the rest of my body." Budail, saying that he will convey the message to the Quraish leaders, went back. When he returned to the Quraish and communicated the Holy Prophet's ﷺ response, some of them did not want to even hear him, and were in a fit of war, while others, like 'Urwah Ibn Mas'ūd, the leader of his tribe, advised them to at least hear him. Then when Budail conveyed the message of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, 'Urwah said to the leaders of Quraish that Muḥammad's suggestions were fair and satisfactory, and therefore, they should be accepted. He opted to negotiate and asked for their permission to confer with the Holy Prophet ﷺ with the aim of reaching an agreement of peace. Thus the second person to pay a visit to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in an attempt to negotiate was 'Urwah who said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "If you wipe out your own people, the Quraish, will it be good for you? Have you ever heard anyone

destroying his own people?" Then there was a heated and protracted parleys between 'Urwah and the Companions, and while this was going on, 'Urwah observed that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ performed his ablutions, his companions would not allow the water to fall on the ground but would rub it on their bodies and clothes. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ spoke, they would lower their voices. 'Urwah went back to the Quraish leaders, and described the whole scenario to them, adding that "I have been to the courts of the Caesar and Khosroes, and the Negus also, but by God, never have I seen any people so devoted to a king as are the Companions of Muḥammad to him. He is suggesting a correct proposal, and I suggest that you accept it." But the people replied that they could not accept it; "Muḥammad must go back this year, and may come again the following year." When 'Urwah's suggestion was not accepted, he returned with his people. After him a person by the name of Jalīs Ibn 'Alqamah, the leader of the bedouins, visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ . He saw the Companions in pilgrim-robes with sacrificial animals. He too returned and explained to his people that these people had come to perform their 'Umrah in the House of Allah. "It is not proper in any way to debar them." The people did not pay heed to his suggestion either. He too went away back with his deputation. A fourth person arrived to confer with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and persuade him to give up his intention to enter Makkah. But the Holy Prophet ﷺ repeated the same reply to this deputation that he had made to Budail and 'Urwah. He went back to Quraish and communicated the Holy Prophet's ﷺ reply to them.

Part [8] : Sayyidnā 'Uthmān Despatched as a Special Envoy

Imām Baihaqī reports on the authority of 'Urwah Ibn Zubair رضي الله عنه that when Allah's Messenger ﷺ settled in Ḥudaibiyah, it unnerved the Quraish. He decided to send an envoy with the message that he had not come to fight, but to perform 'Umrah. Therefore, they should not block his way. He called upon Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه for this task. He said, "Quraish are my implacable enemy, because they are fully aware of my ardent support for Islam, and there is not a single member of my tribe in Makkah that will support me. As a result, I will not be able to change their mind. I propose the name of 'Uthmān for this task. He is the most appropriate person who, because of his tribe, holds a special power and honour in the whole of Makkah." Allah's Messenger ﷺ accepted the proposal and sent

off Sayyidnā ʻUthmān ﷺ for the task. He also advised him to visit the socially and economically disabled Muslim men and women who were not able to migrate from Makkah and were suffering hardships. He was to console them that they should not be distressed. Soon, Allah willing, Makkah will be conquered and their difficulties will end. First, Sayyidnā ʻUthmān ﷺ went to those people who had gathered in Baldaḥ to block the way of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and confront him. He communicated to them the same message that was conveyed to them by Budail and ʻUrwah. They replied that they had heard the message and that it was not acceptable. Having received their reply, he attempted to get into Makkah. Abān Ibn Saʻīd [who later on embraced Islam] met him and welcomed him warmly. He took him into his refuge and allowed him to convey his message anywhere in Makkah without any fear of hindrance. Then he gave his mount to Sayyidnā ʻUthmān ﷺ which he rode and entered Makkah, because his tribe Banū Saʻīd was eminently powerful.

Sayyidnā ʻUthmān ﷺ met each one of the Quraish leaders, and conveyed the Holy Prophet's ﷺ message: "We have not come to fight, but to perform *ʻumrah*. After completing the rites of pilgrimage we shall return home. Indeed, if the road is blocked, we shall fight. Quraish themselves have been debilitated by several wars. Therefore it would be to their advantage to leave us and other Arabs alone. Then we shall see who overpowers the other. If the Arabs overpower us, then their objective would be accomplished. If we overpower them, then too they will have a choice to fight at that stage. During this time they will have the opportunity to improve and preserve their strength." But they rejected his proposal. Then ʻUthmān ﷺ visited the helpless Muslims and conveyed to them the Holy Prophet's ﷺ message. This communication pleased them immensely, and they asked him to convey their *salam* to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Having communicated the Holy Prophet's ﷺ message, the Makkans allowed Sayyidnā ʻUthmān ﷺ to perform the *ṭawāf* of the House if he wished. But he refused saying he would not do that unless the Holy Prophet ﷺ would have first performed it. ʻUthmān ﷺ stayed in Makkah for three nights, and continued to invite the Quraish leaders to accept the Holy Prophet's ﷺ message.

Part [9] : Tension between Quraish and Muslims: Seventy Makkans Captured

In the meanwhile Quraish selected fifty men and asked them to be on

the look-out for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. As soon as they find an opportunity, their task was to assassinate him. Whilst the men were on the look-out for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Muḥammad Ibn Maslamah رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet's ﷺ body-guard, captured them and brought them to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the other hand, Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه was already in Makkah and ten more Muslims joined him in the Holy City. When the Quraish heard that fifty of their men have been captured, they detained 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه and other Muslims. A cavalry of Quraish marched towards the Muslim caravan and shot arrows and threw stones at them. One Companion - Ibn Zanīm by name - was martyred. The Muslims captured ten of the Quraish horse-riders. In the meantime a rumour reached the Holy Prophet ﷺ that 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه has been assassinated.

Part [10] : The Pledge of Riḍwān

Having received this rumour, the Holy Prophet ﷺ gathered his Companions under an acacia tree and took a solemn pledge from them that they would fight the Quraish to the last breath of their lives. This pledge came to be known as *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān*, which signified those lucky people who had taken the oath had obtained Allah's pleasure. This is referred to later on in the Sūrah. Authentic Prophetic Traditions speak eminently of the people who participated in this pledge. Since 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه was on a mission to Makkah under the direction of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he was absent at the time of the solemn pledge. So the Holy Prophet ﷺ placed one of his own hands on the other hand of his and said, "This is 'Uthmān's pledge." This illustrates the distinction of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه.

Part [11] : Peace Treaty at Ḥudaibiyah

A distinct event or episode of the scenario of Ḥudaibiyah is that through, the grace of Allah, the Quraish were overawed and subdued by the Muslims. As a result, they themselves were then willing to make peace. Thus they sent three of their men as representatives, namely, Suhail Ibn 'Amr, Ḥuwaiṭib Ibn 'Abdul 'Uzzā and Mikraz Ibn Ḥafṣ. (Later the first two of the representatives embraced Islam.) They apologised to the Holy Prophet ﷺ on behalf of their people. Suhail Ibn 'Amr said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ "The report that 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه and his companions have been killed is absolutely false. They are being sent to you. Set free our men you have captured." The Holy Prophet ﷺ set them free. It is

recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad and Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ that verse 24 of this Sūrah ﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنكُمْ﴾ refers to this episode. Then Suhail and his deputation went to Quraish and described to them the amazing scene of *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān* where the *ṣaḥābah* showed their readiness to lay down their lives and willingness to make the supreme sacrifice. The opinion-makers of Quraish suggested that nothing would be better for them than they would compromise on Muslims' retiring that year without entering Makkah, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions may visit Makkah the following year only for three days to perform 'Umrah. On that occasion they may slaughter the sacrificial animals and put off their pilgrim-robes, otherwise the impression created would be that attempts were made to block the Holy Prophet's ﷺ way, but he forced his entry into Makkah, which would be tantamount to a humiliating defeat for them. When Suhail arrived again with message, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "It seems that Quraish has decided to make peace. That is why they have sent Suhail again." The Holy Prophet ﷺ sat up cross-legged. Two of his Companions, 'Abbād Ibn Bishr and Salamah, رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین armed themselves with weapons and stood on his sides to guard him. Suhail came, whilst sitting courteously in front of him, delivered the message of Quraish. The Companions generally were not happy to put off the pilgrim-garb without performing 'Umrah. They spoke harshly to Suhail - the voices sometimes became loud and at other times low. 'Abbād Ibn Bishr ﷺ reprimanded Suhail for raising his voice in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. After heated and protracted parleys, the Holy Prophet ﷺ agreed to enter into Peace Treaty. Suhail wanted to have the Peace Treaty reduced to writing. The Holy Prophet ﷺ called Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ and dictated to him to write the words, بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ *bismil- lāhir-raḥmanir-raḥīm*. Suhail objected to this - saying that the words *raḥmān* and *raḥīm* do not exist in our idiom. He said they should write the words that used to be written before, that is, بِاسْمِكَ اَللّٰهُمَّ *bismika- allāhumma*. The Holy Prophet ﷺ agreed to this and asked Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ to erase the بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ *bismil-lāhir- raḥmanir-raḥīm* and insert بِاسْمِكَ اَللّٰهُمَّ *bismika- allāhumma*. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ to write "This is the Peace Treaty into which Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah entered." Suhail objected to this as well, and argued that they did not recognise him as the 'Messenger of Allah'. If they had, they would never have prevented

him from visiting Allah's House. There should be no such expression in the Treaty that would be in defiance of any party's belief system. Therefore, it should read Muḥammad, the son of 'Abdullāh. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ granted this and dictated to Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ to erase the words, 'the Messenger of Allah' and replace it with 'the Son of 'Abdullāh.' Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ, despite being an embodiment of obedience, said he could not erase the attributive title *rasūl* [Messenger] of Allah from his name. Sayyidnā 'Usaid Ibn Ḥuḍair and Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah ؓ withheld Sayyidnā 'Alī's ؓ hand so that he might not rub the attributive title out. He should not write any appellation with his name other than the *rasūl* [Messenger] of Allah. "If they do not accept it, then the sword will decide the matter" they said. Voices arose all around. Despite the fact that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was an Ummi who had never written before, took the document in his hand and wrote with his own pen the following preamble:

> هٰذا ما قاضى محمد بن عبد الله وسهيل بن عمرو اصلحا على وضع الحرب عن النّاس عشر سنين يأ من فيه النّاس ويكف بعضهم عن بعض
>
> "This is the Treaty into which Muḥammad the Son of 'Abdullāh and Suhail Ibn 'Amr entered. They agree that war shall be suspended for ten years, during which time people would be able to live peacefully and no party would indulge in any hostility against the other."

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ wanted that the treaty should have a clause to the effect that the Muslims would not be hindered from performing *ṭawāf* that year, but Suhail swore by God to say that it was not possible. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ conceded that to him. Suhail then inserted his own clause: if a Makkan [even if he is a believer] were to go over to Muḥammad ﷺ without his guardian's permission, he shall be sent back to his guardian; but should any of Muḥammad 's followers return to the Quraish, he shall not be sent back. At this, the common Muslims raised their voices and exclaimed that it was not tolerable to send one of their own Muslim brethren back to the pagans. However, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ accepted this clause as well, and explained that if any of the believers is gone over to the Quraish of his own accord, Allah has distanced him from the Muslims, and they should not bother about him. If any of their men comes over to the Muslims and they send him back to

the pagans, Allah will pave the way for him.

Sayyidnā Barā' ؓ summarises that the Treaty contained three clauses: [1] If anyone during that period from among the Quraish went over to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, without his guardian's permission, he would return him to them; [2] if a Companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ came over to the Quraish, they would not return him; and [3] the Holy Prophet ﷺ, together with his men, should retire that year, and visit Makkah the following year only for three days to perform 'Umrah, but they shall carry no arms save sheathed swords. Towards the end of the Treaty, the concluding statement was appended: "This Agreement between the people of Makkah and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is a guarded document which none shall violate. Whosoever would like to join the Holy Prophet ﷺ and make himself a party to the Treaty from his side, shall have the liberty to do so; and likewise whosoever would like to join the Quraish and make himself a party to the Treaty from their side, shall have the liberty to do so."

As soon as this proclamation was made, Banū Khuzā'ah jumped at the opportunity, and entered into alliance with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but Banū Bakr, on the other hand, sided with the Quraish and allied themselves with them.

Terms and Provisions of the Treaty Upset the Companions

The Muslims were noticeably perturbed over the terms of the Treaty that were apparently tilted against their interests. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ exclaimed in extreme grief and indignation: "O Messenger of Allah! are you not the True Prophet of Allah?" He replied: "Why not!" Then Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ asked: "Are we not on the right path and they on the wrong?" He replied: "Why not!" Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ asked: "Is it not a fact that our martyrs are in the Paradise and their slain ones in the Fire?" He replied: "Why not!" Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ then said: "Why should we submit to this humiliation and return without observing 'Umrah or Allah decides the matter through war?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "I am the servant of Allah and His Messenger. I can never violate His command. He will never destroy me. He is my Helper. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ posed more questions to the Prophet ﷺ: "O Messenger of Allah! did you not promise us that we would visit Allah's House and perform *ṭawāf*?" He replied: "Yes, indeed, I did promise, but did I promise that it will happen this

year?" Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ replied: "No, you did not promise that." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ responded: "The event will definitely happen as I promised. You will visit the House and perform the *ṭawāf*."

Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ kept quiet, but his grief and indignation did not subside. After the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he went to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ and repeated his questions to him as he had posed them to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He replied that the Prophet ﷺ is the servant of Allah and His Messenger. He is not at liberty to violate any Divine decree. Allah is his Helper. Therefore, hold on to his stirrup until the last breath of your life. By Allah! he is on the path of Truth. In short, Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ was in intense grief and pain because of the seemingly unfavourable terms and provisions of the Treaty. In fact, he is reported to have said: " I never gave way to doubt since I embraced Islam, but on this occasion I could not avoid it." (Transmitted by Bukhārī) Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ allayed his misgivings and suggested to seek refuge with Allah from the evils of Shaiṭān. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ said: "I seek refuge in Allah from the evils of the Shaiṭān." He says that since he realised his misgivings, he continued to observe voluntary prayers, keep voluntary fasts, emancipate slaves and give alms, so that Allah may pardon his error.

The Case of Abū Jandal: The Prophet's Commitment to the Treaty

The terms and provisions of the Treaty had just been concluded, and Companions were still grieving over them. Suhail Ibn 'Amr was the chief negotiator on behalf of Quraish. Abū Jandal was Suhail's son. He embraced Islam and was imprisoned by his father. He used to persecute him harshly; fetters were put about his ankles; and there were signs of violence on his body. He could not bear the persecution, so somehow he managed to escape to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and sought asylum. Some of the Muslims went forward and granted him the asylum. Suhail yelled out: "This is the first instance of the violation of a proviso of the Treaty. If he is not returned, I shall never accept any of the other provisions in the document". The Holy Prophet ﷺ had already entered into the Treaty and was bound by its terms and provisions, therefore he called Abū Jandal and asked him to be patient for a little while longer. Soon Allah will pave the way for him and other helpless Muslims, who are detained in

Makkah, to live in easier circumstances and in a peaceful atmosphere. This case of Abū Jandal really rubbed salt into the wound or added fuel to the fire. The Companions were sure that Makkah will be conquered instantaneously, but when they experienced the apparently unfavourable situation, their grief and disappointment knew no bounds. They were on the brink of disaster and ruination. However, the Treaty was concluded, and on behalf of the Muslims Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf, 'Abdullāh Ibn Suhail Ibn 'Umar, Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Muḥammad Ibn Maslamah, 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib and others رضى الله عنهم اجمعين had appended their signatures. Likewise on behalf of the idolaters, Suhail and a few others appended their signatures.

Putting Off the Pilgrim-Garb and Slaughtering the Sacrificial Animals

When the document was finalised , the Holy Prophet ﷺ addressed the Companions, and asked them to slaughter their sacrificial animals in that very place, shave their heads and put off the pilgrim-robes, but they were so overwhelmed by grief that no one moved from his position to comply. This depressed the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and he went up to his blessed wife Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها and expressed his grief to her. She gave him the most apt advice, saying: "Do not reprimand them at this time, because they are acutely grieved by the terms of the Treaty and by returning without observing 'Umrah. Call the barber in the presence of all, and get your own head shaved, put off your pilgrim-garb and slaughter your own camel." He followed her advice. When the Companions saw this, they followed suit. They started shaving each other's head, slaughtered their animals and put off their pilgrim-robes. The Holy Prophet ﷺ earnestly supplicated for all.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ stayed on the plain of Ḥudaibiyah for nineteen days and, according to other versions, twenty days. He then started his return journey. With his Companions he first went to Marr Ẓahrān, and then arrived in 'Usfān. When they reached here, their provisions were depleted: very little food and water had been left for them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ spread a dining-sheet and asked everyone to put the little they had on the sheet. In this way the left-overs were collected on the sheet. There were 1400 people: they all sat around the sheet, the Holy Prophet ﷺ supplicated and asked them to eat. The noble Companions

report that 1400 people ate to the full and in addition they filled their bowls - yet nothing had diminished. This was the Holy Prophet's second miracle that appeared on this plain. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, seeing this, was highly delighted.

The Noble Companions' Strength of Faith and Obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ Tested Once Again

It was noticed in the foregoing sections that the Companions were extremely unhappy at the terms and provisions of the Treaty. They found it even more difficult and painful to return without performing 'Umrah or fighting a war. It was their strength of faith that despite all odds and the awkward situation, they persisted in their faith in and obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On his way back from Ḥudaibiyah, at Kura'-ul-Ghamīm Sūrah Al-Fatḥ was revealed which the Prophet ﷺ recited to the blessed Companions. Despite the terms and provisions of the Treaty and returning home without 'Umrah wounding their hearts, this Sūrah calls the trip "a manifest Victory". Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه could hardly contain himself and inquired: "Messenger of Allah! is this 'victory'?" He replied: "By Him in whose Hand is my life, this is indeed 'a manifest Victory'!" The noble Companions submitted to him and thus were assured that it was "a manifest Victory".

The Effects and Advantages of the Treaty

One immediate effect of this Treaty was that the misplaced obstinacy of Quraish and their followers became manifest, and a schism arose among themselves, and they were divided into different groups as a result of differences in thinking and attitudes. Budail Ibn Warqā' separated himself with his comrades from the Quraish. Following his example, 'Urwah Ibn Mas'ūd separated with his group.

Secondly, the Quraish of Makkah were highly impressed by the unparalleled self-sacrifice of the noble Companions. They were also profoundly touched by the unwavering obedience of, and love and reverence for, the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This inclined them to make peace. This was an ideal opportunity for them to wipe out the Muslims, because they were at home with all its conveniences, and the Muslims were on a journey with all its inconveniences. The Quraish had captured all the water spots, whereas the Muslims had to occupy waterless spots - lacking in foodstuffs. They were in full force, whereas the Musims were

ill-equipped in weaponry. Allah infused terror into their hearts. Many members of their group had the opportunity to meet and mingle with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as a result the cheerfulness of Islamic faith was infused into their hearts. Later on they embraced it.

Thirdly, the Peace Treaty made the road safe and secure. The way was opened for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the blessed Companions to call the people towards Islam. Arab delegations visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The blessed Companions, together with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, spread Islam rapidly in every nook and corner. Letters were sent to the rulers of the world - inviting them to the call of Islam. Some of the prominent rulers were impressed. On the occasion of Ḥudaibiyah, there were not more than 1500 Muslims with him, despite the Holy Prophet's ﷺ general invitation for all Muslims to join him to observe 'Umrah. But after the Treaty, people entered Allah's religion in throngs. In the year 7 Hijri Khaibar was conquered, and considerable amount of booty fell into the hands of the Muslims. This strengthened their material power. Hardly two years had passed during which time an unprecedented large number of people joined the Islamic camp. When the Quraish violated the terms of the Treaty, the Holy Prophet ﷺ secretly started preparing for the conquest of Makkah. The Quraish came to know about this, and were unnerved. They sent Abū Sufyān to apologise and to negotiate the renewal of the Treaty, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ refused. As a result of violation by the Quraish of the terms of the Treaty, the Holy Prophet ﷺ within twenty-one months marched towards Makkah with ten thousand strong faithful soldiers of Allah. The Quraish were so overwhelmingly subdued that no fighting took place. There are differing views among the leading jurists whether Makkah was conquered by force of arms or by peaceful means. Nevertheless while in Makkah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had the following announcement made: "Whoever shuts his door shall be safe; whoever enters the mosque shall be safe; whoever enters Abū Sufyān's house shall be safe." This announcement made them concerned about saving themselves. This, on the part of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, was a master-stroke of political sagacity, strategy and ingenuity. As a result, no fighting took place. In sum, Makkah was conquered easily and very comfortably. Thus the Holy Prophet's ﷺ vision turned into a reality. The Companions fearlessly performed the *ṭawāf* of the House, then had their heads shaved or cut short, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, together with his Companions, then entered the Ka'bah where he received its keys. At that

moment, the Holy Prophet ﷺ addressed Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ in particular and other Companions in general, saying: "This is the incident that I have been narrating to you." On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet ﷺ repeated his address to Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ؓ who replied: "Undoubtedly there is no better and greater 'Victory' than the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah." Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ believed from the very outset that the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah was indeed the 'Victory', but people did not have the insight and foresight to discern the reality that was determined between Allah and His Messenger. Allah does not do anything because of people's impatience. Instead, He does what His wisdom demands that everything should take place at the right moment. Therefore, 'a manifest Victory' in this Sūrah refers to the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah.

These were the most important elements of the event of Ḥudaibiyah. This will facilitate the understanding of forthcoming verses of this Sūrah.

Analysis of Verses

لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللّٰهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ (so that Allah may forgive you of your previous and subsequent faults...." - 48:2). If the particle "*lam*" (translated above as 'so that') is taken to be for "*ta'līl*", it indicates the purpose for which, and the reason why, such a manifest Victory is given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is mentioned in this verse that the victory was given to him to bless him with three different bounties. The first bounty is forgiveness of all his past and future shortcomings. Attention was drawn in Sūrah Muḥammad that all Prophets علیهم السلام are infallible. Wherever words like ذنب *dhanb* and عصیان *'iṣyān* ('sin' or 'fault') are attributed to them in the Qur'ān, they are in relation to their lofty status. Works that are merely unadvisable contrary to the preferred practice are also referred to as *dhanb* in relation to the high status of the Prophets by way of reprimand. 'Previous' refers to shortcomings committed before conferment of prophethood, and 'subsequent' refers to shortcomings committed after the conferment of prophethood (Maẓharī). The reason why this victory caused forgiveness for such shortcomings is that large masses of people entered the fold of Islam after it, and naturally the credit of spreading the call of Islam goes to the Holy Prophet ﷺ for which he deserved the divine reward, and an increase in reward always entails forgiveness of the shortcomings.

وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ("...and may guide you to a straight path," 48:2.) This is the second bounty which resulted from the manifest victory. Here arises a question of the highest significance: The Holy Prophet ﷺ was established in the right path from the very outset. Not only was he himself on the right path, but also a source of guidance for the entire world. His night-and-day preoccupation was to call the people towards the Straight Path. So what then is the meaning of guidance to the straight path through manifest victory in the 6th year of Hijrah? A detailed answer to this question can be found in Ma'āriful-Qur'ān Vol 1/pp 71-81 - particularly look at the definitions and the three degrees of Hidāyah [guidance].

Definition of Hidāyah

Hidāyah has been defined as to show the path or to lead someone gently and kindly towards his destination. The real destination of man is to attain Allah's pleasure and his proximity. The degrees of pleasure and proximity are unlimited. Having attained the first degree, man needs to go for the next one, then he should aim for the third one and so on to no end. Not any man, Muslim, saint or prophet is above the need of such spiritual and moral attainment. Therefore, the instruction to pray for right guidance in the first Sūrah is not only to the Muslim Community, but also to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He is to soar higher and higher in the path of spiritual and moral attainment. Allah has, in this manifest victory, raised the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the highest pinnacles of spiritual eminence which is described by the clause *yahdiyaka*.

وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللّٰهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيْزًا (and so that Allah may support you with a mighty support - 48:3.) This is the third bounty which follows naturally from the preceding circumstance of the manifest victory. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has always had help from Allah, but on this occasion he received a very large share.

Verses 4 - 7

هُوَالَّذِىٓ اَنْزَلَ السَّكِيْنَةَ فِىْ قُلُوْبِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ لِيَزْدَادُوْٓا اِيْمَانًا مَّعَ
اِيْمَانِهِمْ ؕ وَلِلّٰهِ جُنُوْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا
﴿٤﴾ لِّيُدْخِلَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ
خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا وَيُكَفِّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ ؕ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ فَوْزًا عَظِيْمًا

﴿٥﴾ وَّيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقٰتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِيْنَ وَالْمُشْرِكٰتِ
الظَّآنِّيْنَ بِاللّٰهِ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ ؕ عَلَيْهِمْ دَآئِرَةُ السَّوْءِ ۚ وَغَضِبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ ؕ وَسَآءَتْ مَصِيْرًا ﴿٦﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ جُنُوْدُ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيْزًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿٧﴾

He (Allah) is such that He sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers, so that they grow more in faith along with their (existing) faith - And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise - [4] **so that He admits the believing men and the believing women to the gardens beneath which rivers flow, to live therein for ever, and so that He may write off their evil deeds and that is a great achievement in Allah's sight,** [5] **and so that He may punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the *mushriks*, men and women, who think evil thoughts about Allah. Upon them there is a vicious circle, and Allah has become angry with them, and He has prepared *Jahannam* for them, and it is an evil destination.** [6] **And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Mighty, Wise.** [7]

Bounties of Allah upon the Participants of Ḥudaibiyah

In the first three verses of this Sūrah, reference was made to Allah's particular bounties bestowed upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the wake of the manifest victory. Some of the participants of Ḥudaibiyah congratulating the Holy Prophet ﷺ, asked him that the favours are conferred exclusively upon him, but what is there in it for them? In response to this query, verses 4-7 were revealed. They distinctly refer to the good graces of Allah upon the participants of Ḥudaibiyah and the Pledge of Riḍwān. These favours were generously bestowed upon them because of faith in, and obedience to, the Holy Prophet ﷺ. All believers whose faith and obedience are complete and perfect will receive similar good graces of Allah.

Verses 8 - 10

اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ شَاهِدًا وَّمُبَشِّرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ﴿٨﴾ لِّتُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ

وَتُعَزِّرُوْهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوْهُ ۚ وَتُسَبِّحُوْهُ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا ﴿۹﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
يُبَايِعُوْنَكَ اِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ ۚ يَدُ اللّٰهِ فَوْقَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ ۚ فَمَنْ نَّكَثَ
فَاِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلٰى نَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ اَوْفٰى بِمَا عٰهَدَ عَلَيْهُ اللّٰهَ فَسَيُؤْتِيْهِ
اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿۱۰﴾

Indeed, We have sent you (O Prophet,) as a witness and as a bearer of good news and as a warner, [8] **so that you (O people,) believe in Allah and His Messenger, and support him and revere him, and pronounce His (Allah's) purity morning and evening.** [9] **Those who pledge allegiance with you by placing their hands in your hand they, in fact, pledge allegiance with Allah. Allah's hand is over their hands. Then, whoever breaks his pledge breaks it to his own detriment, and whoever fulfils the covenant he has made with Allah, He will give him a great reward.** [10]

Injunctions and Related Considerations

In the preceding verses, Allah referred to the favours he bestowed generously upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his *Ummah,* especially upon those who participated in the pledge of Riḍwān. The Bestower of the favours is Allah and the medium is the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, in the current set of verses, the right of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the obligation of the Ummah to honour and revere him is entrenched. First, three attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are referred to: *shāhid, mubashshir, nadhīr. Shāhid* means 'witness' and its sense here is the same as that of shahid which occurs in [4:41].

فَكَيْفَ اِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍۭ بِشَهِيْدٍ وَّجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلٰى هٰٓؤُلَآءِ شَهِيْدًا

"How would it, then, be when We shall bring a witness from every community and shall bring you over them as a witness.

Both forms of the word mean "a witness". Every Prophet will bear testimony to the fact that he has delivered Allah's message to his particular community - some accepted and others rejected. See Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol 2/pp 442-3 for details. Likewise the Holy Prophet ﷺ will bear witness for his community. Qurṭubī writes under [4:41] that the prophets' testimony will be for the people of their respective time as to who accepted

their call to the Truth and who defied it. Likewise the Holy Prophet's ﷺ testimony will be for the people of his particular time. Other scholars express the view that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will bear witness to the entire community's good and bad works, and to its obedience and defiance, because, according to some versions, angels present to the Holy Prophet ﷺ morning and evening the works of the community. Thus he is aware of the entire community's works.

Mubashshir and *Nadhīr*: *Mubashshir* connotes bearer of good tidings and *nadhīr* means a warner. That is to say, he gives glad tidings of Paradise to the believing and obedient sector of the community. On the other hand, he is a Warner to those who rejected the message - making them aware of the punishment of such defiance. Further, the purpose of sending the Messenger has been indicated - that is, to believe in Allah and his Messenger. In addition, it is mentioned that the believers must be characterized by three more qualities:

[1] that they should "support him"
[2] "and revere him"; and
[3] "pronounce His (Allah's) purity morning and evening."

The first phrase contains a verb which is derived from the infinitive or verbal noun *ta'zīr* which denotes to help or support. Punishment is also called *ta'zīr* because the idea underlying punishment is to give real help to the criminal by punishing him (Rāghib: Mufradatul Qur'ān). The second phrase contains a verb which is derived from the infinitive or verbal noun *tawqīr* which means to show reverence. The third phrase contains a verb which is derived from the infinitive or verbal noun *tasbīḥ* which connotes to declare the purity of Allah. In this phrase, the third person anaphoric pronoun attached to the verb refers, by consensus of Qur'ānic grammarians, to "Allah", and there can be no other possibility. Therefore, most of them believe that the third person anaphoric pronouns attached to the respective verbs of the first two phrases also refer to "Allah". From this point of view, the three phrases mean: believe in Allah and help His religion and His Messenger, revere Him and pronounce His purity.

Other scholars refer the third person anaphoric pronouns attached to the verbs of the first two phrases to the "Messenger". From this point of view, the phrases mean: Help the Messenger and revere him; and

pronounce the purity of Allah. However, there is a third group of scholars who feel that in this interpretation there is *intishār-ud-damā'ir* or unconcentrated distribution of pronouns - leading to pronominal ambiguity and vagueness, and making it difficult to follow the meaning of the constructions which is not in conformity with the rules of Arabic rhetoric or *'ilm-ul-balāghah*. Allah knows best.

After that, there is reference to the pledge of Riḍwān which was narrated in part [10] of the story of Ḥudaibiyah. The purpose of the believers in entering into the pledge at the hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was to act upon the command of Allah and to receive His good pleasure. Therefore, when the blessed Companions placed their hands on the hand of the Holy Prophet ﷺ it was tantamount to taking the pledge at the hands of Allah. 'Allah's hand' is in any case something falling in the category of *mutashābihāt* the correct nature of which is cannot be known to us, nor should we attempt to investigate its reality. The significance of the pledge of Riḍwān is described later in the Sūrah. The word *bai'ah*, lexically, connotes a pledge to do some particular work. The ancient and traditional method of this pledge is for the pledging parties to place their hands upon each other, although the placing of hands is not a necessary condition. Nevertheless once the pledge is consummated, juristically it is binding, and its violation is unlawful. Therefore, it is later laid down that whoever violates the pledge will cause loss to himself. It will not cause loss to Allah and His Messenger. Whoever fulfils the terms of the pledge will receive a mighty reward from Allah.

Verses 11 - 14

سَيَقُوْلُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُوْنَ مِنَ الْاَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَآ اَمْوَالُنَا وَاَهْلُوْنَا
فَاسْتَغْفِرْلَنَا ۚ يَقُوْلُوْنَ بِاَلْسِنَتِهِمْ مَّا لَيْسَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ ۭ قُلْ فَمَنْ
يَّمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـًٔا اِنْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضَرًّا اَوْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا ۭ بَلْ
كَانَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا ﴿١١﴾ بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنْ لَّنْ يَّنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُوْلُ
وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِيْهِمْ اَبَدًا وَّزُيِّنَ ذٰلِكَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظَنَّ
السَّوْءِ ۚ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا ۢ بُوْرًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنْ ۢ بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ

فَاِنَّآ اَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ سَعِيْرًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ط
يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ط وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿١٤﴾

Those of the Bedouins who remained behind will say to you, "Our possessions and our families kept us busy, (hence we could not accompany you in your journey to Ḥudaibiyah). So, pray to Allah for our forgiveness." They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say, "Then, who has power to avail you in any thing against Allah, if He intends to do you harm, or intends to do you good? Rather, Allah is fully aware of what you do. [11] **No, but you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never ever return to their families, and it seemed good to your hearts, and you thought an evil thought and became a ruined people."** [12] **And if one does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, then We have prepared a blazing fire for the disbelievers.** [13] **And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He forgives whomsoever He wills, and punishes whomsoever He wills. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [14]

Related Considerations

Reference in this passage is to those Bedouin tribes who were invited by Allah's Messenger ﷺ to join the party of 1400 Muslims who were marching to Ḥudaibiyah but on one pretext or another, they requested to be excused. This was narrated in part [1] of the story of Ḥudaibiyah. According to some versions, some of those people later repented and became sincere Muslims.

Verses 15 - 17

سَيَقُوْلُ الْمُخَلَّفُوْنَ اِذَا انْطَلَقْتُمْ اِلٰى مَغَانِمَ لِتَاْخُذُوْهَا ذَرُوْنَا نَتَّبِعْكُمْ ج
يُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ يُّبَدِّلُوْا كَلٰمَ اللّٰهِ ط قُلْ لَّنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَا كَذٰلِكُمْ قَالَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ
قَبْلُ ج فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ بَلْ تَحْسُدُوْنَنَا ط بَلْ كَانُوْا لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا
﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ لِّلْمُخَلَّفِيْنَ مِنَ الْاَعْرَابِ سَتُدْعَوْنَ اِلٰى قَوْمٍ اُولِيْ بَاْسٍ
شَدِيْدٍ تُقَاتِلُوْنَهُمْ اَوْ يُسْلِمُوْنَ ج فَاِنْ تُطِيْعُوْا يُؤْتِكُمُ اللّٰهُ اَجْرًا حَسَنًا ج

وَاِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿١٦﴾ لَيْسَ
عَلَى الْاَعْمٰى حَرَجٌ وَّلَا عَلَى الْاَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَّلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيْضِ
حَرَجٌ ؕ وَمَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْاَنْهٰرُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿١٧﴾

And those who remained behind will say, when you will proceed to the spoils (of war) to receive them, "Let us follow you." They wish to change the statement of Allah. Say, "You shall not follow us. Allah had said like this beforehand." Then they will say, "No, but you are jealous of us." On the contrary, they do not understand (the reality) but a little. [15] **Say to those of the Bedouins who remained behind, "You will be called against a people possessed of strong fighting power; you will have to fight them, or they will submit. So if you obey, Allah will give you a good reward, and if you turn away, as you had turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment.** [16] **There is no blame on the blind, nor is there any blame on the lame, nor is there any blame on the sick. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him to the gardens beneath which rivers flow. And whoever turns away, He will punish him with a painful punishment.** [17]

Injunctions and Related Issues

The reference in this passage is to the incident which took place in the 7th year of Hijrah after the Holy Prophet ﷺ returned from Ḥudaibiyah. When he intended to march on Khaibar, he took with him only those sincere Muslims who were with him at Ḥudaibiyah and participated in the Pledge of Riḍwān. When Allah promised His Messenger the conquest of Khaibar and great spoils, those Bedouin tribes who had contrived to remain behind when the Holy Prophet ﷺ went for 'Umrah, requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be allowed to join the Muslim army, either because they guessed that Khaibar would be conquered and they would receive a good share of the booty, or because they perceived the divine blessings bestowed on the Muslims as a result of the expedition of Hudaibiah' and being remorseful on their wrong decision, they intended to join the new expedition. In response to their request, the Qur'ān says: يُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ يُّبَدِّلُوْا كَلٰمَ اللّٰهِ "They wish to change the statement of Allah...[48:15]" 'Allah's

statement' refers to the injunction that the right to participate in the expedition of Khaibar and receiving a share in its spoils is reserved exclusively for those sincere Muslims who were with the Holy Prophet ﷺ at Ḥudaibiyah. The same injunction is again referred to by saying, كَذٰلِكُمْ قَالَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ "Allah had said like this beforehand.... [48:15]" It means that the injunction of restricting the right of participation in Khyber to the participants of Hudaibiah had been revealed by Allah before the revelation of these verses. However, this injunction is not available in the Qur'ān anywhere else. So the question is: how is it then correct to refer this injunction as a 'statement of Allah' or as 'Allah has said like this'? Answer to this question depends on understanding the different kinds of the divine revelation which follow:

Divine Revelation is not restricted to the Qur'ān; Many injunctions are revealed without being a part of the Qur'ān, and Prophetic *aḥādīth* have also the status of being 'Allah's injunctions'

Waḥy [revelation] is divisible into two types: [1] *Waḥy Matluww* or recited revelation; and [2] *Waḥy Ghayr-Matluww* or unrecited revelation. *Waḥy Matluww* refers to the Qur'ān - the words and meanings of which are both from Allah. *Waḥy Ghayr-Matluww* refers to the Ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ - the wordings of which are from the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the meanings of which are from Allah (See Ma'āriful Qur'ān: Vol. 2/570). *Waḥy Ghayr-Matluww,* like *Waḥy Matluww,* is one of the fundamental sources of Islamic injunctions.

With this juristic principle in mind, scholars have explained that the restrictive injunction made to the participants of Ḥudaibiyah is nowhere asserted explicitly in the Qur'ān or *Waḥy Matluww*. However, it was made for them to the Holy Prophet ﷺ through *Waḥy Ghayr-Matluww* on his way to Ḥudaibiyah to which the Qur'ān refers by the phrases *Kalāmullah* (the statement of Allah) and *qālallāh* (Allah said). From this a general juristic rule may be deduced that the injunctions entrenched in *aḥādīth ṣaḥīḥah* [Authentic Prophetic Traditions] have the status of being 'Allah's statement'and 'Allah's saying'. These verses are sufficient to unmask the deviation of those who turned aside from the truth by refusing to accept *aḥādīth* as a religious authority.

Some people have tried to argue that the restrictive injunction is found in the Qur'ān itself, that is in verses 18 and 19 of this very Sūrah "so He sent down tranquillity upon them, and rewarded them with a well-nigh victory, and many spoils that they would receive." This verse was revealed in the beginning of the journey to Ḥudaibiah, and "well-nigh victory" refers, according to consensus of Qur'ānic scholars, to the victory of Khaibar. Thus the phrases *Kalāmullah* (the statement of Allah) and *qālallāh* (Allah said) could refer to verses 18 and 19, and it is not necessary that it is construed as an injunction conveyed through *Waḥy Ghayr-Matluww*. But this argument is misconceived because verse 18 and 19 contain a promise that the participants of Ḥudaibiah would receive many spoils in the victory of Khaibar, but it is nowhere mentioned in these verses that these spoils will be restricted to the participants of Hudaibiah and no one else will participate in them. Therefore, No doubt, this restriction was made by *Waḥy Ghayr-Matluww* or the Ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is meant by the Qur'ānic phrases *Kalāmullah* and *qālallāh*.

Some people have applied the words, 'the statement of Allah' occurring in verse 15 to verse 83 of Sūrah At-Taubah:

فَاسْتَاْذَنُوْكَ لِلْخُرُوْجِ فَقُلْ لَّنْ تَخْرُجُوْا مَعِيَ اَبَدًا وَّلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوْا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا ؕ اِنَّكُمْ
رَضِيْتُمْ بِالْقُعُوْدِ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ

They sought disorder even earlier and tried to upset matters for you, until the Truth arrived and the will of Allah prevailed, though they disliked it. [Sūrah Taubah: 48]

This is not true, because the verses of Sūrah At-Taubah pertain to the battle of Tabūk which took place in the 9th year of Hijrah whereas the expedition of Khaibar took place two years earlier in the 7th year of Hijrah (Qurṭubī; and others).

قُلْ لَّنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَا ("...say: 'You shall not follow us' - 48:15".) In this clause, the laggards who contrived to be left behind are emphatically told that they could not be allowed to march against the Jews of Khaibar and partake of the booty. However, this prohibition is restricted to the expedition of Khaibar, but in the near future they would be allowed to fight other battles. This is the reason why from among the laggards, the tribes of Muzainah and Juhainah later on fought in the company of the Holy

Prophet ﷺ (al-Rūḥ citing from al-Baḥr; Bayān).

Some of the Laggards Repent and Become Sincere Muslims

All the laggards that did not march towards Ḥudaibiyah were prohibited from taking part in the expedition of Khaibar, whereas not all of them were hypocrites, some were sincere Muslims. And some at that particular time were hypocrites, but later on, through the Grace of Allah, they became sincere Muslims. Verse [16] consoles and comforts the laggards that though, because of Allah's promise made to the participants of Ḥudaibiyah, they cannot be allowed to take part in the expedition of Khaibar, yet in the near future the sincere Muslims would be called upon to fight against much more powerful enemies. Thus the Qur'ān predicts سَتُدْعَوْنَ اِلٰى قَوْمٍ اُولِىْ بَأْسٍ شَدِيْدٍ تُقَاتِلُوْنَهُمْ اَوْيُسْلِمُوْنَ "You will be called against a people possessed of strong fighting power; you will have to fight them, or they will submit". (48:16)

We need to bear in mind the verse foretells that they will be invited to take part in battles that will be fought against a formidable militant nation. Islamic history bears ample testimony to the fact that this prediction was not fulfilled during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. There are several reasons for this. First of all, though battles did take place during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ after the expedition of Khaibar, there is no proof that the Holy Prophet ﷺ called upon the Bedouins to fight. Secondly, after that no battle took place with such a nation whose fighters were so brave, chivalrous and formidable as the Qur'ān describes. Although in the battle of Tabūk the encounter was with a formidable force, neither is there any evidence that the Bedouins were invited to fight, nor did any actual fighting take place in Tabūk, because Allah had infused terror in the minds of the opponents, and they did not turn up. As far as the battle of Ḥunain is concerned, there is no proof of their being invited, nor was the opponent so powerful. Therefore, some of the leading scholars of Tafsīr express the view that the prediction in the verse refers to the fierce and protracted wars with the Byzantine and Iranian empires which took place during the reign of Sayyidnā Al-Fārūq-ul-A'ẓam رضي الله عنه (Ibn 'Abba, 'Ata, Mujāhid, Ibn Abī Laila, and Hasan in Qurṭubī'). Sayyidnā Rāfi' Ibn Khadīj رضي الله عنه says: " We read this verse in the Qur'ān in which the word '*qawm*' (people) occurs, but we did not know to which '*qawm*' reference is made, until after the Holy Prophet ﷺ when Abū Bakr

Ṣiddīq ﷺ took over the reign of Caliphate and invited us to take up arms against Banū Ḥanīfah, the people of Yamāmah, that is, Musailimah Al-Kadhdhāb. So we thought the Qur'ān refers to this '*qawm*' (people)." However, there is no conflict or contradiction between these views. The word '*qawm*' (people) could comprehend all these nations. Having cited all these views, Imām Qurṭubī asserts that this verse confirms the legitimacy of the Caliphate of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr and Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ. The Qur'ān itself asserts in the above-quoted verse their calling upon the people to fight.

تُقَاتِلُوْنَهُمْ اَوْيُسْلِمُوْنَ ("...you will have to fight them, or they will submit") According to the *qirā'ah* (reading) of Sayyidnā 'Ubaiyy ﷺ in the second disjunctive clause اَوْ يُسْلِمُوْا *au yuslimū* the *nūn* has been omitted. Therefore, Imām Qurṭubī takes the disjunctive particle *au* originally standing for "or" in the sense of *ḥattā* (until). In other words, the fighting will carry on with that nation until they surrender - whether by embracing Islam or by submitting to the Islamic rule.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْاَعْمٰى حَرَجٌ (There is no blame on the blind, nor is there any blame on the lame, nor is there any blame on the sick...48:17) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ reports that when some sincere Muslimss who were physically unable to fight read the concluding clause of verse 16: وَاِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا "And if you turn away, as you had turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. [48:16]" they expressed their concern about the warning. Verse [17] was revealed to exempt them from the injunction of *jihād*. These people included blind, lame or sick persons (Qurṭubī). And Allah knows best!

Verses 18 - 21

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اِذْ يُبَايِعُوْنَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ
مَافِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَاَنْزَلَ السَّكِيْنَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَاَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيْبًا ﴿١٨﴾
وَّمَغَانِمَ كَثِيْرَةً يَّاْخُذُوْنَهَا ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيْزًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَعَدَكُمُ
اللّٰهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيْرَةً تَاْخُذُوْنَهَا فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هٰذِهٖ وَكَفَّ اَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ
عَنْكُمْ ۚ وَلِتَكُوْنَ اٰيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيْمًا ﴿٢٠﴾

وَّاُخْرٰی لَمْ تَقْدِرُوْا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ اَحَاطَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَیْءٍ قَدِيْرًا ﴿٢١﴾

Allah was pleased with the believers when they were pledging allegiance with you by placing their hands in your hands under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them, and rewarded them with a well-nigh victory, [18] **and many spoils that they would receive. And Allah is Mighty, Wise.** [19] **Allah had promised you many spoils that you would receive, so He gave these to you sooner, and stopped the hands of the people from (harming) you. And (He did this) so that it becomes a sign for the believers, and so that He guides you to the right path.** [20] **And (there are) other (victories) that have not come within your power as yet, (but) Allah has encompassed them. And Allah is Powerful over every thing.** [21]

Commentary

لَقَدْ رَضِیَ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اِذْ يُبَايِعُوْنَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ (Allah was pleased with the believers when they were pledging allegiance with you by placing their hands in your hands under the tree,...48:18). The reference in this verse is to the same pledge that was given at Ḥudaibiyah and which was referred to earlier in verse 10. Verse [18] reinforces verse [10.]. In verse [18] Allah announces that those sincere participants who took this solemn oath have obtained His pleasure. Therefore, the oath came to be known as *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān* (that is, the pledge that earned Allah's pleasure). The purpose of this is to compliment the participants of the allegiance and to emphasise the obligation of fulfilling the covenant. It is recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ that on the day of Ḥudaibiyah, the companions were 1400 people, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to them: اَنْتُمْ خَيْرُ اَهْلِ الْاَرْضِ "You are the best of people living on the surface of the earth." It is recorded in Muslim on the authority of Umm Bishr رضی اللہ عنہا that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, لَایَدْخُلُ النَّارَ اَحَدٌ مِمَّنْ بَايَعَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ "None of those who swore fealty under the tree will enter the Fire" (Maẓharī). Therefore, the participants of this allegiance are like the participants of the battle of Badr. The Qur'ān and Ḥadīth give glad tidings of Allah's pleasure and Paradise to the participants of the battle of Badr. Likewise the sources give glad tidings of Allah's pleasure and

Paradise to the participants of *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān*. These tidings bear testimony to the fact that these sincere participants meet their end in the state of faith, righteousness, and with deeds that please Allah, because this announcement of Allah's pleasure guarantees that.

Vilification of, and Finding Fault with, the Noble Companions Prohibited

Tafsīr Maẓharī says that the noble Companions are among the best of the Prophet's ﷺ followers, and as such Allah has announced forgiveness of their sins, shortcomings and slips - if they committed any. Therefore, it is against the declaration of this verse to investigate into those of their deeds that are not laudable, and to make it a subject of debate. It is also a crystal clear denunciation of the attitude of *Rawāfiḍ*, the Shi'ites, who reject the legitimacy of the caliphs Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, ﷺ and vilify them and other blessed Companions - condemning them as unbelievers and hypocrites.

The Tree of *Riḍwān*

The tree that is mentioned in this verse refers to mimosa arabica or the gum-acacia tree. It is reported that after the Holy Prophet ﷺ some people used to take walk there and perform *ṣalāh*. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ came to know about this and feared that the future generation lacking in knowledge might start worshipping the very tree, as it happened in the past generations. Therefore, he had the tree felled. However, it is recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Ṭāriq Ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān ﷺ who reports: "I once went for Ḥajj, and I passed by some people who had gathered in a place and were performing *ṣalāh*. I asked them: 'Which mosque is this?'. They replied: 'This is the tree under which the Holy Prophet ﷺ took *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān*.' After that I went up to Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Muṣayyab ﷺ and narrated this incident to him. He said: 'My father was one of those who participated in *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān*. He said to me that when he went to Makkah the following year he looked for the tree, but could not find it.' Then Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Muṣayyab ﷺ added: 'Companions who participated in *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān* at the hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ themselves are unaware of the location of the tree, but it is strange that you should know about it. Are you more knowledgeable than they are?'" (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī). This goes to show that later on people must have determined conjecturally -

based on incomplete and doubtful evidence - about a particular tree that it was the tree under which the pledge was taken. As a result, they frequented the place and performed *ṣalāh*. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ knew that it was not the real tree. Then he apprehended people's involvement in shirk. Therefore, he had the tree felled.

Conquest of Khaibar

Khaibar is the name of a province which comprises many settlements, fortresses and gardens (Maẓharī). Verse 18 refers to the victory of Khaibar by saying, وَاَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا "and rewarded them with a well-nigh victory,". There is consensus of the scholars on that 'well-nigh victory' in this verse means the victory of Khaibar which occurred after returning from Ḥudaibiyah. According to some versions, the Holy Prophet ﷺ stayed in Madinah after returning from Ḥudaibiyah only for ten days, and according to other versions, he stayed for twenty days. Then he marched against Khaibar. According to Ibn Isḥāq's version, he returned to Madīnah in the month of Dhulḥijjah and set out for Khaibar in the month of Muḥarram in the 7th year of Hijrah.

Khaibar was conquered in the month of Ṣafar in the 7th year of Hijrah. This is reported by Waqidī's Maghāzī. According to Ḥāfiẓ Ibn-Hajar, this is the preferred opinion. (Tafsīr Maẓharī)

In any case, this shows that the conquest of Khaibar took place many days after the march to Ḥudaibiyah. According to consensus of scholarly opinion, Sūrah Al-Fatḥ was revealed in the course of his return journey from Hudaibiya. However, there is a difference of opinion whether the Sūrah was revealed in its entirety or some of its verses were revealed later. If the first view is preferred, then the conquest of Khaibar is a prophecy that Muslims will definitely achieve and is described in past perfect tense to denote that it is as certain as an event that has already happened in the past. If the second view is preferred, it is possible that these verses were revealed after the conquest of Khaibar. Allah knows best!

وَمَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَّأْخُذُوْنَهَا (and many spoils that they would receive...48:19) This clause refers to the great booty that fell into the hands of Muslims during the conquest of Khaibar.

وَعَدَكُمُ اللّٰهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً تَأْخُذُوْنَهَا فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هٰذِهٖ (Allah had promised you many

spoils that you would receive, so He gave these to you sooner - 48:20). The phrase "many spoils" mentioned here refers to the sizeable spoils that fell into the hands of Muslims in the conquests which followed the victory at Khaibar, in the rest of Arabia and the neighbouring countries. This verse embodies a prophecy that Muslims will achieve other great victories after the victory of Khaibar, and in consequence many spoils until the end of the world. However, before those numerous conquests, the conquest of Khaibar was given first, the spoils of which were reserved by Allah exclusively for the participants of Ḥudaibiyah. But the spoils to be achieved in all the next conquest would be common to all. This shows that the injunction of reserving the right of participating in Khaibar is not laid down explicitly in these verses. That injunction was laid down, as detailed earlier, in a separate category of revelation, that is, in the unrecited revelation. The Holy Prophet ﷺ acted upon the injunction and imparted its knowledge to the noble Companions.

وَكَفَّ اَيۡدِىَ النَّاسِ عَنۡكُمۡ (...and stopped the hands of the people from (harming) you. ... 48:20). This refers to the unbelievers of Khaibar. In this battle, Allah did not allow them the opportunity to show much strength or force. Imām Baghawī says that the tribe of *Ghaṭafān* was the ally of the Jews of Khaibar. When it heard of the Holy Prophet's march against the Jews of Khaibar, it equipped itself with heavy arms to defend the Jews. But Allah infused terror into their minds, and they were worried that if they went forward, it was possible that a Muslim army might attack their homes in their absence. As a result, they got cold feet and did not have the courage to proceed (Maẓharī).

وَيَهۡدِيَكُمۡ صِرَاطًا مُّسۡتَقِيۡمًا (...And (He did this) so that He guides you to the right path.... 48:20) It is clarified earlier (in the commentary on verse 2 of this Sūrah that there are several degrees of guidance. From that point of view, they were all already guided on the straight path. Here it refers to the degree of guidance which they had not yet attained, that is, full reliance on Allah and increase in the power of faith.

وَّاُخۡرٰى لَمۡ تَقۡدِرُوۡا عَلَيۡهَا قَدۡ اَحَاطَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا (And (there are) other (victories) that have not come within your power as yet, (but) Allah has encompassed them...." (48:21). This verse embodies a prophecy that Muslims will achieve many more great victories after the victory of Khaibar. But Allah says that they were unable to achieve them at that time; they would happen in

future. Among these victories, Makkah was the first one to be achieved. Therefore, some scholars refer this to the victory of Makkah. However, the wordings are general and refer to all the victories that will be achieved till the end of the world (Mazharī).

Verses 22 - 26

وَلَوْ قٰتَلَكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوَلَّوُا الْاَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَايَجِدُوْنَ وَلِيًّا وَّ لَا
نَصِيْرًا ﴿٢٢﴾ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِىْ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖۚ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ
اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيْلًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَهُوَالَّذِىْ كَفَّ اَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَاَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ
بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اَنْ اَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرًا ﴿٢٤﴾ هُمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَالْهَدْىَ مَعْكُوْفًا اَنْ يَّبْلُغَ مَحِلَّهٗ ؕ وَلَوْلَا رِجَالٌ مُّؤْمِنُوْنَ وَنِسَآءٌ
مُّؤْمِنٰتٌ لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوْهُمْ اَنْ تَطَئُوْهُمْ فَتُصِيْبَكُمْ مِّنْهُمْ مَّعَرَّةٌۢ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ
لِيُدْخِلَ اللّٰهُ فِىْ رَحْمَتِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوْا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿٢٥﴾ اِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فِىْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ
حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَاَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ سَكِيْنَتَهٗ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهٖ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
وَاَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوٰى وَكَانُوْٓا اَحَقَّ بِهَا وَاَهْلَهَا ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ
شَىْءٍ عَلِيْمًا ﴿٢٦﴾

And had the disbelievers fought you, they would have certainly turned their backs, then they would have found neither a supporter nor a helper - [22] **- according to the consistent practice of Allah that went on since before, and you will never find a change in Allah's consistent practice.** [23] **And He is the One who restrained their hands from you and your hands from them in the valley of Makkah after He had let you prevail over them, and Allah is watchful over what you do.** [24] **They are those who disbelieved and prevented you from the Sacred Mosque (Al-Masjid-ul-Ḥarām), and**

(prevented) the sacrificial animals that were detained from reaching their due place. And (Allah would have allowed you to fight,) had there not been believing men and believing women whom you did not know that you might have trampled them, and thus an embarrassing situation might have befallen you because of them unknowingly, (but this was avoided) so that Allah may admit to His mercy whom He wills. And if they (the believing men and women) had been separate (from disbelievers), We would surely have punished those of them who disbelieved with a painful punishment. [25] **When the disbelievers developed in their hearts indignation, the indignation of ignorance; then Allah sent down tranquility from Himself upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and made them stick to the word of piety, and they were very much entitled to it, and competent for it. And Allah is All-Knowing about every thing.** [26]

Commentary

بِبَطۡنِ مَكَّةَ (...in the valley of Makkah...) The Arabic word used here is *baṭn* which means 'belly' and in relation to a city, it refers to its center. However, in the present context it is used for Ḥudaibiyah, because of its close proximity to Makkah. This supports the Ḥanafī view that some parts of Ḥudaibiyah are included in the *ḥaram*. The relevant details may be found in our commentary on the verse 2:196.

فَتُصِيۡبَكُمۡ مِّنۡهُمۡ مَّعَرَّةٌۢ بِغَيۡرِ عِلۡمٍ (and thus an embarrassing situation might have befallen you because of them unknowingly....48:25): According to some authorities on lexicology *ma'arrah* connotes "sin"; according to others it means "*harm*"; and other authorities say it denotes "shame" or "embarrassment". In this context, apparently the last meaning appears to be apt. There was a nucleus of Muslims in Makkah and if the fight had broken out, Muslim army would have unwittingly killed their own Muslim brethren in faith, thereby causing great injury to their own cause, and incurring *obloquy* and *opprobrium* for themselves.

Natural Safeguard of the Noble Companions against Mistakes

Imām Qurṭubī says that if a Muslim unknowingly kills another Muslim, it is not a sin or crime. It is, however, certainly a source of shame, embarrassment and regret. Since it is a *Qatl Khaṭa'*, the laws of *diyah* [blood-wit] will apply. Allah has protected the noble Companions against

this as well. This shows the noble Companions are not infallible like the prophets of Allah, but Allah has in general terms safeguarded them in a natural way against mistakes which would be a cause of embarrassment, obloquy and opprobrium to them.

لِيُدْخِلَ اللّٰهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ (so that Allah may admit to His mercy whom He wills...48:25): It means that Allah infused patience in Muslims on this occasion to avoid war, because He knew that many people in future would embrace Islam on whom His mercy will be showered. Similarly the nucleus of Muslims who were detained in Makkah will also receive a large share of His mercy.

لَوْتَزَيَّلُوْا (And if they [the believing men and women] had been separate, [from disbelievers], We would surely have punished those of them who disbelieved....48:25) Lexically, the word *tazayyul* denotes 'separation'. The sense is that if Muslims detained in Makkah had been separate and distinct from the unbelievers, the Muslims coming from Madīnah would have been able to save them in case of war, and Allah would have had the disbelievers punished then and there, because that was the demand of their attitude. However, the Makkan society at that time was a mixed society - helpless Muslim men and women and non-Muslims were living together. The Muslims were indistinguishable from non-Muslims. If fighting had broken out, there would have been no way to save the Muslims. Therefore, Allah averted the war.

وَاَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوٰى وَكَانُوْٓا اَحَقَّ بِهَا وَاَهْلَهَا (and made them stick to the word of piety, and they were very much entitled to it, and competent for it - 48:26)". The construction *kalimat-at-taqwā* connotes the word of the pious persons, that is, the *Kalimah* of *Tauḥīd* and *Risālah* whereby a person declares his faith in Allah's Oneness and in the Messengership of Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ. It is named here as 'word of piety' because this word is the foundation of piety, righteousness and right conduct. The noble Companions here are said to have better right to it and more worthy of it, and thus Allah exposed and unmasked those people who accused them of infidelity and hypocrisy. Allah asserts that the noble Companions are more worthy of the word of Islam and better entitled to it, and thus made them adhere to it firmly, whereas the wretched evil-minded people refuse to acknowledge their value and entitlement.

Verses 27 - 29

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ رَسُوْلَهُ الرُّءْيَا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ لَتَدْخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ اِنْ
شَآءَ اللّٰهُ اٰمِنِيْنَ ۙ مُحَلِّقِيْنَ رُءُوْسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِيْنَ ۙ لَاتَخَافُوْنَ ۭ فَعَلِمَ
مَالَمْ تَعْلَمُوْا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُوْنِ ذٰلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيْبًا ﴿٢٧﴾ هُوَالَّذِيْٓ اَرْسَلَ
رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰى وَدِيْنِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهٗ عَلَى الدِّيْنِ كُلِّهٖ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ
شَهِيْدًا ﴿٢٨﴾ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗٓ اَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ
رُحَمَآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرٰىهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَّبْتَغُوْنَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانًا ز
سِيْمَاهُمْ فِيْ وُجُوْهِهِمْ مِّنْ اَثَرِ السُّجُوْدِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرٰىةِ ۛصلے
وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْاِنْجِيْلِ ۛقف كَزَرْعٍ اَخْرَجَ شَطْاَهٗ فَاٰزَرَهٗ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ
فَاسْتَوٰى عَلٰى سُوْقِهٖ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيْظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ ۭ وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّاَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿٢٩﴾ ع

Indeed, Allah has made true to His Messenger the dream (shown) with truth: You will most definitely enter the Sacred Mosque inshaallah (if Allah wills,) peacefully, with your heads shaved, and your hairs cut short, having no fear. So He knew what you did not know, and He assigned before that a well-nigh victory. [27] **He is the One who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the religion of truth, so that He makes it prevail over all religions. And Allah suffices as a witness.** [28] **Muḥammad is the messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are hard against the disbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down in Rukū', prostrating in Sajdah, seeking bounty from Allah and (His) good pleasure; their distinguishing feature is on their faces from the effect of Sajdah (prostration). This is their description in the Torah; and their description in the Injīl is: like a sown crop that brings forth its shoot, then makes it strong, then it grows thick and stands straight on its stem, looking good to the farmers, – so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them. Allah has promised forgiveness and a huge reward to those of them who**

believe and do good deeds. [29]

Recapitulation of the Event of Ḥudaibiyah

When the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah was completed, it was decided that the Muslims would not enter Makkah that year, and would return to Madīnah without performing 'Umrah. They were highly upset at this, because the blessed Companions' determination to perform 'Umrah was on account of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ vision, which is also a kind of revelation. The fact that everything was apparently happening contrary to the vision, they could not understand how the Holy Prophet's ﷺ journey had served its purpose. Some of the noble Companions, as a result, began to doubt, God forbid!, whether the vision was not fulfilled. The non-believers and hypocrites, on the other hand, taunted the believers that their Prophet's dream was not translated into reality. At this, the current set of verses was revealed (Transmitted by Baihaqī and others from Mujāhid).

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ رَسُوْلَهُ الرُّءْيَا بِالْحَقِّ (Indeed, Allah has made true to His Messenger the dream (shown) with truth...48:27). *Ṣidq* [truth] is, lexically, the antonym of *kidhb* [lie or falsehood]. Both these words are used for statements. If a statement is conformable to existing fact or reality, it is *ṣidq*. If it lacks accord with fact or reality, it is *kidhb*. Sometimes this word is used in relation to actions. In that case the word connotes the realization of an action, as for instance in [33:23], رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوْا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللّٰهَ (Among the believers are men who were true to their covenant with Allah;...). In this case the word *ṣidq* takes two grammatical objects, as in this verse the first object of the verb *ṣadaqa* is *rasūlahū* and its second object is *ru'yā*. The verse says that Allah has made true the dream. Here the event that was to take place in future has been expressed in the past perfect tense because of its certainty of occurrence. A reinforcing context that this event is definitely going to take place in future is expressed in energetic aorist thus: لَتَدْخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ "You will most definitely enter the Sacred Mosque." (The construction under analysis *la-tadkhulu-nna* is made up of the following constituents: The corrobarative *la* is prefixed to the aorist denoting "Certainly" + the doubled energertic or corrobatative *nun* reinforcing the sense of "most definitely" appended as a suffix to the future tense *tadkhulu* "you shall most definitely enter"). That is to say, the vision you had seen that you

have entered the sacred Mosque will most definitely happen. It will not happen this year. It will happen at a future date. The date had not been specified in the dream. The blessed Companions in their enthusiasm made up their mind to set out for the journey that very year, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ concurred with their determination. There was much Divine wisdom in it which became manifest at the time of the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah and served many useful purposes to which reference is already made. For example, when Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه questioned the whole situation and expressed his doubt, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه allayed his suspicions and misgivings. He said no particular date and year was specified in the Holy Prophet's ﷺ vision. If it did not happen now, it does not matter; it will happen at some other time (Qurṭubī).

Importance of *insha-allāh* for the Performance of Future Works

In this verse Allah promises the Muslims that they will most definitely enter the sacred precincts of Makkah at a future time, and in making His promise He employed the phrase إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ *insha-allāh* [If Allah wills or God willing]. Allah being fully aware of His Will, there was no need for Him to have used the phrase, yet He used it (Qurṭubī). This has been done for the purpose of teaching the Messenger and the people the importance of *insha-allāh*. (Qurṭubī)

مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ (...your heads shaved, your hair cut short... 48:27). It is recorded in Bukhārī that when 'Umrah that was missed in the sixth year of Hijrah was performed in Dhul Qa'dah of the following year [7 .H.] and came to be known in history as '*Umrat-ul-Qaḍā*', Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه says he trimmed the blessed hair of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with a pair of scissors. This incident took place in '*Umrat-ul-Qaḍā*', not in *ḥajja-tul-wadā'* [farewell pilgrimage] because on the latter occasion he had his head shaved (Qurṭubī).

فَعَلِمَ مَالَمْ تَعْلَمُوا (So He knew what you did not know....48:27). It was within Allah's power to have allowed the Muslims to enter the sacred Mosque and perform their 'Umrah that very year. However, there was great wisdom in deferring it until the following year which Allah only knew and the Muslims generally did not know. Among these benefits was the conquest of Khaibar which Allah had willed must be achieved first, so that the Muslims may become a powerful force in terms of material resources. This would make it possible for them to perform their 'Umrah

peacefully and with tranquility. Thus the Qur'ān says: فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُوْنِ ذٰلِکَ فَتْحًا قَرِيْبًا (and He assigned before that a well-nigh victory.) [27]" دُوْنِ ذٰلِکَ *Dūna dhālika* (before that) in this context stands for دُوْنَ الرُّؤْيَا *Dunar-ru'yā*, that is to say, before the fulfilment of this vision, the Muslims must achieve the conquest of Khaibar which is near at hand.* Some scholars have expressed the view that فَتْحًا قَرِيْبًا *fatḥan qarīban* [nigh victory] refers to the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah itself, because that opened the gate for the victory of Makkah and all subsequent victories. Eventually, all the noble Companions acknowledged the Treaty to be the greatest of all victories. The meaning of the verse would be: you did not know what wisdom and good lay hidden in your determination to march, then your apparent failure to accomplish it, and eventually in reaching a peace settlement the terms of which seemed to be hurtful to your self-respect but Allah was fully acquainted with it. He had ordained that before the Holy Prophet's ﷺ vision should manifest itself, you might be blessed with another victory in the form of the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah - a victory near at hand. As a result of this victory, it was seen by all that while on the occasion of Ḥudaibiyah the noble Companions did not number more than 1500, later they increased in number to about 10000 (Qurṭubī).

هُوَالَّذِیْٓ اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰی وَدِيْنِ الْحَقِّ (He is the One who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the religion of truth, so that He makes it prevail over all religions....48:28). In the preceding verses, promises were made about conquests and spoils of war; reference was made to the special merits of the participants of Ḥudaibiyah and general merits of all the noble Companions; and glad tidings were given to them. Now at the conclusion of the Sūrah all these themes are summarized and emphasized. Because these blessings were showered and the glad tidings were given as a result of accepting and obeying the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the verse lays further stress on strengthening the acceptance and obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It also denounces those who reject the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and allays suspicions of those Muslims who were dissatisfied with the terms and provisions of the Treaty

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*. This was necessary because the Jews of Khaibar always conspired with the disbelievers of Makkah against the Holy Prophet ﷺ who was encircled by the Makkans from the South, and by the Jews of Khaibar from the North. Any possible battle with any of them would entail the danger from the backside. The Treaty of Hudaibiah made the South safe for the Muslims, and they were able to conquer Khaibar on the North without any fear from their back. **(Muhammad Taqi Usmani)**

of Ḥudaibiyah. The verse in addition confirms the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and, giving glad tidings, makes a very bold prophecy to the effect that not only would Islam prevail in Arabia but would also eventually triumph over all other religions.

مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ (Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah...48:29). The general style of the Qur'ān is that, instead of referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ by his name, he is normally called by one or another of his characteristic or attributive names especially in vocative cases, as for example, *yā ayyuhan-nabiyyu, yā ayyuhar-rasūlu, yā ayyuhal-muzzammilu* and so on, unlike other prophets who are addressed by their personal names, as for instance, *yā ibrahīmu, yā mūsā, yā 'īsā*. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed four times only in the entire Qur'ān by his personal name Muḥammad. This is done only where there is a special reason for it. Here the reason is that when at Ḥudaibiyah, the Peace Treaty was being written, the unbelievers had objected to the use of the characteristic or attributive name [*rasūlul-lāh*] with the personal name of the Messenger of Allah. The pagan Quraish wiped off Muḥammad *rasūl-ul-lāh,* and insisted that it be replaced with Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdullāh. By the command of Allah, the Messenger accepted it. However, Allah on this occasion, in the Qur'ān, especially attached the characteristic phrase *rasūlul-lāh* [Messenger of Allah] to his personal name [Muḥammad] and thus entrenched it permanently in His Last Book, the Holy Qur'ān, so that it will be written and recited like that until the Judgement Day.

وَالَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗٓ اَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرٰىهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَّبْتَغُوْنَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانًا (...and those who are with him are hard against the disbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down in *ruku'*, prostrating in *sajdah*, seeking bounty from Allah and (His) good pleasure;.... 48:29). From this point onwards the merits of the noble Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are described. Although the immediate addressees of the verse are the noble participants of Ḥudaibiyah and *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān*. But on account of the generality of words, all blessed Companions are included in the description, because a *ṣaḥābī* or Companion is one who embraced Islam, saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ and accompanied him, even for a short time.

The Qualities, Merits and Special Marks of the Noble Companions

Allah Ta'ālā, on this occasion, describes the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and makes a prophecy to the effect that not only would Islam prevail in Arabia, but would also eventually triumph over all other religions. In addition, He has described the qualities, the merits and the special marks of the noble Companions ؓ. The severe test which they had to undergo at the time of the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah has also been described. The passage describes that they never wavered from the path of rectitude despite the fact that the Treaty was against their firm belief and heart-felt emotions, and despite the fact that they could not enter the sacred Mosque, and had to return without performing 'Umrah. In these unfavourable circumstances, they displayed an unusual obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and their strength of faith. The blessed Companions have been described here fully, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ is the Final Messenger and there shall be no prophet or messenger after him. He left behind him the Book of Allah and the paradigm of noble Companions to follow. Specific injunctions have been laid down to emulate their pattern of life. Therefore, the Qur'ān too describes the merits of the blessed Companions, and encourages and emphasizes to follow their model of life.

The first quality of the Companions mentioned here is that they are hard against the unbelievers, and merciful to one another. It was proven time and again that they were harsh against the unbelievers. They sacrificed all their ethnic and tribal relations for the sake of Islam. This was especially demonstrated on the occasion of Ḥudaibiyah. The tenderness of the blessed Companions was especially demonstrated when Islamic brotherhood [*mu'ākhāt*] was created between *muhājirs* [emigrants from Makkah] and *anṣār* [helpers from Madīnah]. Anṣār invited the *muhājirīn* to share with them in their holdings. The Qur'ān describes this quality of the blessed Companions first, because nothing they practiced - whether friendship or enmity, love or hatred - was for any selfish reasons. Everything was for the sake of Allah and His Messenger - and this is the highest degree of perfect faith. In a Ḥadīth recorded by Bukhārī, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

من احبّ للّٰه وابغض للّٰه فقد استكمل ايمانه

"He who loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of

Allah has attained the highest degree of faith."

This means that anyone who has subjugated his friendship, love, hatred and enmity under the Will of Allah has perfected his faith. This clarifies another point: The Companions' being hard against the unbelievers does not imply that they were never tender towards any non-believer. In fact it means that where Allah and His Messenger enjoins them to be hard against the non-believers, they would simply comply without taking into account the relations of kinship or friendship. As far as kind and equitable dealing with them is concerned, the Qur'ān itself promulgates:

لَا يَنْهٰكُمُ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوْكُمْ فِي الدِّيْنِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ

"Allah does not forbid you from those who did not fight you on account of faith, and did not expel you from your homes, that you do good to them, and deal justly with them." (60:8).

There is a large number of incidents where Allah's Messenger and the blessed Companions displayed their kindness and compassion to the helpless and needy unbelievers. Treating them with justice and equity is the general injunction of Islam. No activity flouting justice and equity is permissible even in the field of pitched battle.

The second quality of the blessed Companions is that they are generally preoccupied with bowing and prostrating. The first quality is the mark of their perfection in faith and the second quality is the mark of their perfection in deeds, because *ṣalāh* is the most meritorious of all the good deeds.

سِيْمَاهُمْ فِيْ وُجُوْهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُوْدِ (their distinguishing feature is on their faces from the effect of *sajdah* (prostration)....48:29). That is to say, *ṣalāh* has become such a permanent routine of their life that the special effects of *ṣalāh* and *sajdah* are evident on their faces. These distiguishing features do not necessarily refer to any physical sign on the forehead on account of constant prostration. This in fact refers to the light and brightness that is reflected naturally on the faces of the devout as a result of humility, meekness and gentleness of disposition. Particularly this is one of the effects that follow from offering *tahajjud ṣalāh* regularly. It is recorded in Ibn Mājah on the authority of Syyidna Jābir ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

من كثر صلوٰته بالّيل حسن وجهه بالنّهار

"He who offers his *ṣalāh* abundantly at night, his face looks good during the day."

Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه اللّٰه تعالٰی has said that the "features" in the verse refer to the light that the faces of those who pray will emit on the Day of Judgement.

ذٰلِکَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِی التَّوْرٰىةِ ۚ وَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِی الْاِنْجِیْلِ ۚ كَزَرْعٍ اَخْرَجَ شَطْـَٔهٗ فَاٰزَرَهٗ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوٰی عَلٰی سُوْقِهٖ یُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِیَغِیْظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ ؕ وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّاَجْرًا عَظِیْمًا

(This is their description in the Torah; and their description in the Injil is: like a sown crop that brings forth its shoot, then makes it strong, then it grows thick and stands straight on its stem, looking good to the farmers, so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them. Allah has promised forgiveness and a huge reward to those of them who believe and do good deeds.... 48:29)

This part of the verse states the description of the noble Companions given above about the light of their prostration and prayers on their forehead is the same description as was given in the Torah for the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And another parable of them is put in the Gospel [*injīl*]: When a farmer sows a seed in his field, it grows over a period of time - especially so that it changes from its original form into a form which is at first weak like a thin needle, then it develops into branches getting stronger, larger and more complicated. Eventually when it is fully grown, it is the strongest of shrubs and becomes a tree. Likewise the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the beginning were very few. At one time, besides the Holy Prophet ﷺ there were only three Muslims: Among men, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq رضي الله عنه; among women, Sayyidah Khadījah رضي الله عنها; and among children, Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه. Gradually, but progressively, the strength of the Muslims continued to grow, so much so that the number of the noble Companions who performed the farewell pilgrimage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ is said to be about One hundred and fifty thousand (150,000).

There are three possibilities in this verse: First, the grammatical pause be observed at *fit-tawrāh* in which case it will mean that the previous likeness, that is, the light of the faces is described in the Torah. In this

case, a grammatical pause would not be observed at *fil-injīl*, but one should proceed without stopping, and it will mean that the parable of the noble Companions in the Gospel is like a field or tree which at the beginning is very weak but gradually it grows strong.

The second possibility is that the pause be observed at فِى الْإِنجِيلِ *fil-injīl* rather than at فِى التَّوْرٰىةِ *fit-tawrāh*, in which case the meaning would be that the description of the light of their faces is found both in Torah and the Gospel, as here in the Qur'ān. Then *Ka-zar-'in* "like a sown crop" may be treated as a separate parable.

The third possibility is that the statement does not end at *fit-tawrāh* nor at *fil-injīl*. In this case *dhalika,* the demonstrative pronoun, would point to the next parable, and it would mean that the description of the Companions is given in both the Torah and the Gospel "like a sown crop". If the Torah and the Gospel had been intact in their original form, we could have compared the parables as given in those books with those given here in the Qur'ān and determined its exact meaning. However, the present-day Torah and the Gospel have been subjected to many alterations and distortions. Therefore, its true import cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. Nevertheless, most commentators prefer the first possibility according to which the first description is found in the Torah and the second parable is found in the Gospel. Imām Baghawī says that this description of the noble Companions is found in the Gospel in the following way : At the beginning they will be few in number, then the number will grow and become strong. Qatādah quotes from the Injīl as follows: "Such a people will emerge who will grow like a crop; they will enjoin good works and forbid evil works" (Maẓharī). Despite changes in the present-day Torah and Gospel, the following prophecy is found:

> "He said: The Lord came from Mount Sinai; and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words." [Deut. 33:2]

As pointed out earlier, at the time of the conquest of Makkah there were 10000 Companions who entered the City of Khalīl Ibrāhīm عليه السلام

(Makkah) with the embodiment of light [Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ] whose advent was from the mount Paran (in which the Cave of Ḥirā' is situated). The expression "in his hand will be a fiery sacrosanct law [Sharī'ah]" probably refers to اَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ "hard against the unbelievers". The expression "he will love his people" is understood to refer to رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ "compassionate to one another". The details are set out together with other references in a work Iẓhār-ul-ḥaq, Vol. 3/ chap. 6: p.256. This book was written by Maulānā Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī against the Priest Fonder . In this book, the parable of Injīl is qouted as follows:

> Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. [Matthew 13:31-32]

The following passage is quoted from Mark 4:26 in Iẓhār-ul-ḥaq, Vol 3/chap 6:p. 310:

> And he said, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. (Mark 4: 27-29)(*)

The expression "kingdom of heaven" on various occasions in the Gospel seems to refer to the Final Messenger. Allah knows best!

لِيَغِيْظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ (...so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them...48:29). That is, Allah has characterized the blessed Companions by some noble qualities. He made them strong after being weak and multiplied them into large numbers after being small in numbers. Seeing the growth and expansion of Islam and Muslims, the unbelievers became furious and angry towards them, and envious of them, burning in the fire of jealousy. Abū 'Urwah Zubairi says he was sitting in one of the sessions of Imām Mālik when a person uttered a belittling statement against the blessed Companions. The Imam recited this entire verse. When he came to the clause "so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them. [29]", he

(*). These quotations are taken from King James Version of the Bible.

said this warning will apply to anyone who belittles the blessed Companions (Qurṭubī). The Imām did not say that such a person would become *kāfir*, however he said that the warning applies to such a person. It means that the conduct of such a person will be like that of unbelievers.

وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّاَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا (Allah has promised forgiveness and a huge reward to those of them who believe and do good deeds...48:29). The preposition *min* in the prepositional phrase *min-hum* is by consensus of Qur'ānic scholarly opinion an explicative or *min lil-bayān* or *tabyīn*. Therefore, it means that it is Allah's promise to those Muslims who are selfless in faith and strong in character that He will forgive them and give them a great reward. The preposition min serves to make clear and explains that all the blessed Companions - without any exception - believe and do deeds of righteousness. The second point this verse clarifies is that Allah has promised them all without any exception forgiveness and a mighty reward. *Min lil-bayān* or *tabyīn* is frequently used in the Qur'ān. For example, the command in [22:30] فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْاَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوْا قَوْلَ الزُّوْرِ "So, refrain from the filth of the idols and refrain from a word of falsehood" (22:30). In this clause, the preposition *min* explicates the obscure noun *rijs* as referring to the "idols". Likewise the prepositional phrase *min-hum* here is explicative of "those who believe". *Rawāfiḍ*, however, treat the preposition *min* as partitive denoting a part as distinct from the whole - meaning the promise of forgiveness and mighty reward applies only to a part of those who believed and worked deeds of righteousness. This is completely incompatible with the context and in conflict with the above verses. This verse undoubtedly comprehends all the blessed Companions. However, the immediate application of this verse is to the participants of Ḥudaibiyah and the Pledge of Riḍwān. In the preceding verses Allah has announced that they have incurred His pleasure:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اِذْ يُبَايِعُوْنَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ

> "Allah was pleased with the believers when they were pledging allegiance with you by placing their hands in your hands under the tree,..."(18)

This verse is a guarantee that they will all be firmly established in their faith and righteousness, because Allah is All-knowing and Well-Aware of what is going to happen. If Allah knows that anyone at

anytime will turn away from the faith, He will never announce about His pleasure. Ibn 'Abdul Barr, quoting this verse in the introduction to his book *istī'āb,* writes:

ومن رضى الله عنه لم يسخط عليه ابدًا

"He with whom Allah is pleased, He will never be displeased with him.".

On the basis of this verse, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that no one from among the participants of the Pledge of Riḍwān will ever enter the Fire. It is absolutely invalid to exclude some of those who were originally promised forgiveness and a mighty reward. Hence there is unanimity among *ummah* on the point that all the noble Companions are impartial, unbiased and worthy of confidence.

All Companions Are Inmates of Paradise: Their Sins Are Forgiven and to Belittle them is a Major Sin

Many verses of the Qur'ān bear testimony to this fact. Some of the verses are part of this Sūrah. For instance,

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

"Allah was pleased with the believers...48:29"

and

اَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوٰى وَكَانُوْٓا اَحَقَّ بِهَا وَاَهْلَهَا

"...and made them stick to the word of piety, and they were very much entitled to it, and competent for it.". (48:26)

Besides, in several verses scattered in various other Sūrahs the same position has been affirmed for all the Companions:

يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِى اللّٰهُ النَّبِىَّ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَه،

"on the Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him." [66:8]

وَالسّٰبِقُوْنَ الْاَوَّلُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ وَالْاَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُمْ بِاِحْسَانٍ رَّضِىَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ وَاَعَدَّلَهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِىْ تَحْتَهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ

"As for the first and foremost of the Emigrants and the Supporters, and those who followed them in goodness, Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with him; and He has

prepared for them gardens berneath which rivers flow..."[9:100]

And in Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd, Allah has promised the Companions as follows:

وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْحُسْنٰى

"...Allah has promised Husna (the good) for each." (57:10)

And about Ḥusnā it is said in Sūrah Anbiyā':

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنٰى اُولٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُوْنَ

Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept far away from it (the Hell) [21: 100]

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

خیرالقرون قرنی ثم الّذین یلونهم ثمّ الذین یلونهم.

"The best of generations is my generation, then that which follows it immediately and then that which follows it immediately (Bukhārī)."

In a Ḥadīth the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Do not revile my Companions, for if one of you contributed as much gold as the mount 'Uḥud, it would not amount to as much as the *mudd* of one of them, or half of it (Bukhārī). A *mudd* in Arabia was a measure which, according to the Ḥanafī school of Fiqh, is equal to 1.032 litre or 815. 39 grams and, according to the other three major schools, it is equal to 0. 687 litre or 543 grams. Bazzār records with a sound chain of transmitters that Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Of all the people in the entire world Allah has chosen my Companions, and of all the Companions He has particularly chosen four for me - Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī ﷺ. (See Jam'-ul-Fawā'd)

There is a Ḥadīth recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mughaffal ﷺ. In it the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

اللّٰہ اللّٰہ فی اصحابی لا تتّخذوھم غرضا من بعدی فمن احبّھم فبحبّی احبّھم ومن
ابغضھم فببغضی ابغضھم ومن اٰذاھم فقد اذانی ومن اذانی فقد اذی اللّٰہ ومن اذی
اللّٰہ فیوشک ان یأخذہ (راہ الترمذی عن عبداللّٰہ بن المغفل از جمع الفوائد)

"Fear Allah, fear Allah regarding my Companions! Do not make them a target of your criticism after me. He who loves

them does so on account of my love; he who hates them does so on account of hating me; and he who injures them has injured me, and he who injures me has injured Allah. He who intends to injure Allah will soon be punished by Him."

I have written a book entitled *maqām-e-ṣaḥābah* in which I have collected relevant Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic Traditions pertaining to the status of the Companions. This book has already been published in Urdu. The 'Ummah is unanimous on the point that all the blessed Companions are righteous and worthy of confidence. The book deals elaborately with their disagreements and the civil wars that took place among them. It also explains how a Muslim critic should deal with the differences of the *ṣaḥābah* and whether it should be made a subject of debate and investigation or one should avoid commenting on them. Some of these issues to the degree necessary have been included in the commentary of Sūrah Muḥammad. Please refer to the relevant section there. Allah's help is sought and on Him is our reliance!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Fatḥ
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt

(The Apartments)

Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt was revealed in Madīnah. It has 18 Verses and 2 Sections.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُقَدِّمُوْا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَرْفَعُوْٓا اَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ
صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوْا لَهٗ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ اَنْ
تَحْبَطَ اَعْمَالُكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَغُضُّوْنَ اَصْوَاتَهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ امْتَحَنَ اللّٰهُ قُلُوْبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوٰى ۭ لَهُمْ
مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّاَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٣﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُنَادُوْنَكَ مِنْ وَّرَاۗءِ الْحُجُرٰتِ
اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوْا حَتّٰى تَخْرُجَ اِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ
خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٥﴾

O those who believe, do not proceed ahead of Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah. Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [1] O those who believe, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and be not loud when speaking to him, as you are loud when speaking to one another, lest your good deeds become void while you are not aware. [2] Surely, those who lower their voices before Allah's Messenger are the

ones whose hearts Allah has tested for piety; for them there is forgiveness, and a great reward. [3] **As for those who call you from behind the apartments, most of them lack understanding.** [4] **Had they remained patient until you come out to them, it would have been much better for them. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [5]

Background of Revelation

According to Qurṭubī, there are six narratives cited as the background of revelation of these verses. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabī confirms that all the narratives are correct, because they all are included in the general meaning of the verses. One of the narratives, reported by Bukhārī, is that once some people from the tribe of Tamim came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. During their stay, one of the issues under discussion was to appoint someone as a ruler of this tribe. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ suggested the name of Qa'qā' Ibn Ma'bad, while Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ proposed the name of Aqra' Ibn Ḥābis. Both of them discussed the issue for a while during which the voices of both became loud. These verses were revealed in this background.

لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ (...do not proceed ahead of Allah and His Messenger - 49:1) The phrase بَيْنَ الْيَدَيْنِ, literally, means "between the two hands", but in Arabic usage it means 'in front of' or 'ahead of'. It means: do not go ahead of or in front of Allah's Messenger. The Qur'ān does not say in what matter they are prohibited from preceding him. It would appear that the general prohibition includes preceding by word or deed. Wait for the Messenger's reply unless he himself appoints someone to reply. Likewise if he is walking, no one should overtake him. If they are sitting in a dining session, no one should start eating before him. If there is a clear indication or strong evidence that he himself wants to send someone forward, this would be possible, for example some people used to be asked to go on a journey or war ahead of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Respect for Islamic Scholars and Religious Leaders

Some of the scholars have ruled that Muslims should observe the same rule in respect of Islamic scholars and spiritual masters as enjoined by the Qur'ān, because they are the heirs of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ .One day the Holy Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Sayyidnā Abūd-Dardā' ؓ walking in front of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ, he reprimanded him saying: "you are walking in front of a person who is better than you in this world and in

the hereafter". Then he added : "The Sun did not rise or set on any man better than Abū Bakr ﷺ in the world besides the Prophets". (Rūḥ-ul-Bayān on the authority of Kashf-ul-Asrār). Therefore, scholars have ruled that teachers and spiritual guides should be treated with similar respect.

لَا تَرْفَعُوْٓا اَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ (...do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet. - 49:2) This is another etiquette to be observed while in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ . This verse teaches the believers that they should not raise their voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ nor speak aloud to him as one speaks aloud to another in general discussions. The verse warns that neglecting this etiquette may entail nullification of one's virtuous deeds, because this is a kind of disrespect to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus when this verse was revealed, the blessed Companions became very apprehensive and very cautious. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ said: "By God! O Messenger of Allah, from now till my last breath, I shall speak to you as if someone is whispering." (Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr on the authority of Baihaqī) When this verse was revealed, Sayyidnā 'Umar's ﷺ voice became so low that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to ask him to repeat what he said, so that he could understand what he was saying to him (Ṣiḥāḥ). Thābit Ibn Qays ﷺ had a naturally loud voice. When he heard this verse, he feared that his good deeds would be rendered void, he wept and lowered his voice (Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr on the authority of Baihaqī).

It is Prohibited to Greet and Speak Aloud in front of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Mausoleum

Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabī says that respect for the Holy Prophet ﷺ after his demise is just as compulsory as it was during his life-time. Therefore, some of the scholars have expressed the view that it is disrespectful to say *salām* or speak very loudly in front of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ mausoleum. Likewise it is discourteous to make noise where Prophetic traditions are recited, because when the blessed words of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are being recited, it is compulsory to listen to them silently. In the same manner, it is an unmannerly behaviour to raise voices after his demise when his noble words are repeated.

Ruling

As the Qur'ānic injunction "do not proceed ahead of Allah and His Messenger" applies to 'Ulamā' as the heirs of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, likewise the injunction "do not raise your voices above the voice of the

Prophet." is applicable to the great scholars of Islam also. When sitting in their assembly, it is impolite to raise voices so loudly that their voices are suppressed (Qurṭubī).

أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ (lest your good deeds become void while you are not aware - 49:2.) This clause is indicating the reason why the Muslims are directed not to raise their voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They are warned that non-compliance of the rule may nullify their virtuous deeds. According to the axioms of Sharī'ah and universally established principles, a few perturbing questions arise here. First of all, according to the unanimous view of *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah*, the only thing that can destroy righteous deeds is *kufr* or disblief. No sin can destroy good deeds. Here the Qur'ān addresses the noble Companions and the believers. It addresses them by calling them "O believers" which goes to show that they are "believers" and not "disbelievers" - so how can their righteous works be rendered void? The second point is that "faith" is an act of free will. A person cannot be a believer unless he embraces faith with his own free will. Likewise "disbelief" [*kufr*] is an act of free will. A person does not become *kāfir* [unbeliever] unless he adopts disbelief with his own free will. The concluding phrase "while you are not aware" seems to be against this principle: Failure of good deeds is the punishment of disbelief which ought to be a result of one's own free will and the phrase shows that the punishment lacks "free will". So how can the good deeds go to waste?

My master, the honorable sage of the Ummah has in his Bayān-ul-Qur'ān explicated the passage in such a manner that all these perturbations are resolved. He says the meaning of the verse is thus: O Muslims, avoid raising your voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ or speaking loudly to him, because in so doing there is the fear that your deeds should be thwarted. The danger in raising your voices above that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ lies in the fact that it is tantamount to discourtesy to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is the same as vexing him. It is unthinkable that the noble Companions would intentionally attempt to hurt him. However, it is possible that certain deeds and actions, such as "advancing forward" and "raising voices", without the intention of hurting could upset or offend him. Therefore, all such conducts have been absolutely prohibited, forbidden and regarded as sin. The essential characteristics of

some of the sins are such that the people who commit them lose the Divine aid of repentance and the ability or capacity to perform righteous works. As a result, he gets so engrossed in sins that they lead him to "disbelief" and thus the righteous deeds fail. Likewise hurting one's religious leader, teacher or spiritual guide is a sin that runs the risk of losing the Divine aid. Thus conducts such as "advancing before the Holy Prophet ﷺ" or "raising voices" are such sinful conducts that can cause the Divine help to be taken away. This situation eventually leads one to "disbelief" which destroys one's good works. Because the believer may not have intentionally performed the act of hurting, thus he would not even perceive how he got involved in the process of "disbelief", and "thwarting of good deeds". Some of the scholars have expressed the view that if someone has taken a righteous, holy person as his spiritual guide, then he shows disrespect to him, then such a person may suffer the same consequences: that is, sometimes it becomes the cause of Divine aid being removed and of incurring His wrath which eventually destroys the treasure of "faith". We seek refuge with Allah from it!

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِن وَرَآءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ (As for those who call you from behind the apartments, most of them lack understanding. - 49:4) In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned a third etiquette about dealing with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is directed that when he is at home, one should not call him from outside. Particularly calling him by his name is an unmannered attitude. Reasonable persons would not do it. The term *ḥujurāt* (translated above as 'apartments') is the plural of *ḥujrah*. Lexically, it refers to a four-walled apartment or dwelling, comprising a courtyard and a roofed building . In Madīnah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had nine wives. Each one of them had a separate apartment, where on different days, he used to stay in succession.

The Apartments of the Mothers of the Faithful

Ibn Sa'd on the authority of 'Aṭā' Al-Khurāsānī gives a description of these dwellings. He writes that these apartments were built of palm branches and their doors were covered with thick black woolen curtains. Imām Bukhārī in Al-'Adab-ul- Mufrad and Baihaqī in his collection record that Dāwūd Ibn Qais reports that he had visited these "apartments" and estimated that from the door of the "apartment" to the roofed part of the

building, it must be about seven cubits, the room about ten cubits and the height of the roof about eight cubits[1]. These apartments of the Mothers of the faithful were included in the Holy Prophet's ﷺ mosque during the reign of Walīd Ibn 'Abd-ul-Mālik at his own command. On that day in Madīnah, people were lamenting and bewailing.

Occasion of Revelation

Imām Baghawī, on the authority of Qatādah ؓ, reports that the delegation of Banū Tamīm arrived in Madīnah in the afternoon and came up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ when he was resting in one of his apartments. These bedouins were not acquainted with the social manners and etiquette of a civil society. They stood outside the apartment and called out: O Muḥammad, come out to us! On this occasion, verse [4] was revealed (Musnad of Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, and others record similar reports in differential wordings as quoted by Maẓharī).

Additional Notes

The noble Companions and their followers showed the same respect and courtesy to their scholars and spiritual masters as enjoined by the Qur'ān for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is recorded in Bukhārī and other collections that when Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ wanted to inquire about any Prophetic Tradition from any knowledgeable Companion, he would go to his house and sit at the threshold without calling him or knocking at the door. He would wait there until the Companion himself comes out. When he came out on his own, he would ask him about the Tradition. However, the scholar himself would say to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ: "O cousin of Allah's Messenger, why did you not knock at the door and inform me about your arrival?" Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ would reply: "A scholar in his community is like a prophet, and Allah has directed us that we should wait until he comes out on his own. Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah ؓ says, "I never knock on the door of any scholar at any time, but I wait until he himself has emerged and then meet him (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

Ruling

In the clause of verse حَتّٰى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ "...until you come out to them ...49:5", the prepositional phrase *ilaihīm* "to them" is a restrictive phrase, and it implies that people must wait until the Holy Prophet ﷺ emerges to talk to them, but if he has emerged for some other reason or purpose,

(1) One Cubit= about 18 inches

even in this case it is not appropriate to talk to him. The speakers should wait until a suitable situation or occasion arises for them to speak: that is, they should speak about their particular issue when the Holy Prophet ﷺ turns his attention to them for that purpose.

Verse 6

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِن جَآءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌۢ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوٓا۟ أَن تُصِيبُوا۟ قَوْمًۢا
بِجَهَٰلَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا۟ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَٰدِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

O those who believe, if a sinful person brings you a report, verify its correctness, lest you harm a people out of ignorance then become remorseful on what you did. [6]

Background of Revelation

According to Ibn Kathir, it is reported in Musnad of Ahmad that Ḥārith Ibn Ḍirār Ibn Abī Ḍirār, the leader of the tribe of Banul-Muṣṭaliq, whose daughter Sayyidah Juwairiyah رضی اللہ عنہا was one of the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, came up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and he called him towards Islam and asked him to pay his Zakah. He says, "I embraced Islam and pledged to pay *Zakāh*, and said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that I would go to my people, call them towards Islam and ask them to pay *Zakāh*. Those who would accept my invitation and pay the compulsory alms, I would collect their alms. I requested that on a designated date of a designated month, a collector be sent to me, so that the alms might be handed over to him." Accordingly, when Ḥārith had collected the alms of the believers and the alms collector did not arrive on the designated date or even long after that, he feared that may be the Holy Prophet ﷺ is displeased with them for some reason or the other. Otherwise it was unlikely for the Holy Prophet ﷺ not to keep his promise. Harith expressed his apprehension to the leaders of the new Muslims, and wanted them to go to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the other hand, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had sent Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah to collect the *Zakāh* from them. However, on his way he thought that the members of that tribe are his old enemies and feared that they might kill him. With this fear he

returned to Madīnah, and said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they refused to pay *Zakāh*, and wanted to kill him. On hearing this, the Holy Prophet ﷺ became very angry, and under the command of Khālid Ibn Walīd ؓ he dispatched a force of fighters in the way of Allah. On the one hand, this contingent was dispatched, and on the other hand Ḥārith Ibn Dirār with his people was on his way to meet the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The two groups met near Madīnah. Ḥārith inquired: "To whom have you been sent?" They replied: "We are sent to you". Ḥārith inquired: "for what purpose?" They narrated the mission of Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah who reported to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the tribe of Banul-Muṣṭaliq refused to pay Zakāh and planned to kill him. Ḥārith said on oath, "I swear by Allah who sent Muḥammad as His true Messenger, Walid did not arrive in the location, nor did I see him. Since no envoy had come to us at the appointed location, I apprehended that you are annoyed with me due to some shortcoming on my part. Therefore, I have come here. Ḥārith says that the present verse of Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt was revealed on this occasion (Ibn Kathīr).

Other versions have it that Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah did go to the tribe of Banul-Muṣṭaliq. As the tribe was expecting the Holy Prophet's ﷺ envoy to arrive on a designated date, they came out of their settlement as a mark of respect to welcome him. Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah suspected that they might have come out to kill him on account of their old hostility. Therefore he returned instantly from there, and went up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and reported to him, according to his suspicion, that they were not willing to pay the alms and wanted to kill him. On hearing this report, the Holy Prophet ﷺ dispatched Sayyidnā Khālid Ibn Walīd ؓ to make a thorough investigation, so that appropriate measures could be taken. Sayyidnā Khālid Ibn Walīd ؓ arrived near the settlement at night and encamped there. He selected a few of his men and sent them furtively as spies into the location to investigate. They returned and reported that the members of the tribe were Muslims and believers; they were regular with their prayers and in paying their alms; and they did not find the tribe doing anything contrary to Islam. Sayyidnā Khālid Ibn Walīd ؓ came back, and reported the whole story to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This verse was revealed on that occasion (Ibn-Kathīr - summary of several reports).

Ruling

On the basis of this verse, it may be ruled that if a mischief-monger, sinner, wicked or corrupt person complains about any person or nation, or accuses them of any wrong-doing, it is not lawful to act upon the sole information or evidence of such a person without making a thorough investigation.

Injunctions and Rulings Related to Verse [6]

Imām Jaṣṣāṣ in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān says that this verse indicates that it is not lawful to accept any information conveyed by a sinful person and act upon it unless it is investigated by other sources and confirmed. This verse contains the injunction *fatabayyanu* (verify its correctness). In another reading the word '*tathabbatu*' conveys the same meaning. The sense is: "Do not rush into taking actions or measures; be stable, and stand firmly in your place; and do not be easily moved or shaken. Wait until the news or information is confirmed by other independent sources. Since it is not lawful to accept the information or report of an ungodly sinful person, then the testimony of such a person would not be acceptable with greater force, because every testimony is a statement which is confirmed by a kind of oath.

Therefore, according to majority of scholars a statement or evidence of an ungodly person, in terms of Sharī'ah, is not acceptable. However, all scholars agree that as far as the common worldly affairs are concerned, it is not necessary to ascertain the accuracy or truth of every news and the reliability of every informer. The jurists are clear that this rule of law does not apply in the case of ordinary matters, because the rule is governed by an effective cause which is laid down in the explicit text of this verse: أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ (lest you harm a people out of ignorance - 49:6). Thus matters which are not governed by the effective cause will be an exception to, and excluded from, the rule of this verse. For instance, if a wicked person, or for that matter even an unbeliever, delivers a gift to someone, stating that this gift has been sent by a certain person, it would be lawful to accept the gift and the statement. Details may be found in books of Fiqh, such as in *mu'īn-ul-ḥukkām* and others. I have given the details in part six of Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān [Arabic version]. Learned scholars may peruse them there.

An Important Question and Answer Regarding the Truthfulness of the Companions

Authentic *Aḥāadīth* verify that this verse was revealed in connection with Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah, and in the verse he is referred to as *fāsiq* (sinner). Apparently, it goes to show that a *ṣaḥābi* (Companion) can be a *fāsiq*. This is in conflict with the universally established maxim الصّحَابة كلّهم عدول, (the Companions are all truthful and reliable). None of their statements, reports or testimony can be doubted. 'Allāmah 'Ālusī in Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī says that the truth of the matter is according to the majority of the scholars, the blessed Companions are not infallible; it is possible for them to commit sins - major sins which is *fisq*; at the time of committing the sin they will be dealt with in the appropriate manner in terms of the punishment prescribed for that act; and if any of them is found guilty of lying, his news, information, report or testimony will be rejected. However, on the basis of the express texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, *Ahl-us-suunah wal-Jama'ah* believe that Companion can, though, commit sins, they do not persist in it. There is no companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who has not repented and purified himself after committing a sin. The Qur'ān, referring to the general class of the Companions, announces in general terms رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ (...Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him - 98:8). The pleasure of Allah is not possible without forgiveness of sins. Qāḍī Abū Ya'la says that Allah's pleasure is one of His eternal attributes. He expresses His pleasure only for those about whom He knows they will die whilst seeking His pleasure (Ibn-Taimiyyah in Aṣ-ṣārim-ul-Maslūl).

In sum: From amongst the magnificent group of the noble Companions, it is possible for a handful of them to commit a sin sometime or the other, but Divine aid comes to their rescue and they immediately repent. Through the blessing of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ company, Allah had made Sharī'ah their nature. As result, it was very rare for them to do anything contrary to Sharī'ah and very unlikely to commit sins. It was natural for them to dedicate themselves to performing righteous deeds in conformity with the Holy Prophet's ﷺ paradigm and the principles established by Islam. They exerted such efforts in obeying Allah and His Holy Prophet ﷺ in all matters of life, the example of which is never found in any of the previous religious communities. In comparison to the

uncountable good works, merits and excellence to their credit, even if they commit a sin once in a life-time, it would be quashed or would be counted as non-existent. Furthermore, *ḥadīth* collections record a number of incidents where the noble Companions expressed their supreme love and devotion for Allah and His Holy Prophet ﷺ. They expressed their highest degree of fear for Allah at the time of committing the most minor sins and repented forthwith. We have on record that some of the Companions presented themselves for punishment when they did something wrong and others tied themselves up to the column of the mosque; and so on. A *ḥadīth* informs us that "He who repents on a sin is like him who has not committed any sin". The Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ الْحَسَنٰتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ

Surely, good deeds erase bad deeds. [Surah Hud: 114]

This rule applies to them with greater force, since their good deeds are not like the good deeds of the general class of people. In fact, the status of their good deeds has been described in the collections of Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī on the authority of Sa'īd Ibn Zaid ﷺ:

واللّٰه لمشهد رجل منهم مع النّبىّ صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلّم يغبّر فيه وجهه خير من عمل احدكم ولو عمر عمر نوح

"By Allah, anyone of them who participated in a *jihād* with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his face got covered with dust is better than your life-long obedience and worship, even if you attained the age of Nūḥ ﷺ."

Therefore, they will receive the same punishment that is prescribed for a sin or crime which they might have committed. However, despite this it is not lawful for any of us to regard any of them as *fāsiq*. Consequently, if any Companion during the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ committed a sin or crime which could be the cause of producing in him the effect of *fisq,* as a result of which he might have been referred to as a *fāsiq* on that account, it does not become possible for that *fisq* to be regarded as his permanent characteristic to call him, God forbid!, as a *fāsiq* for all times to come (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

Nevertheless, it is not at all necessary that in the current verse, Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah is categorically referred to as *fāsiq*. Despite the fact that the

verse is supposed to have been revealed in his incident, it does not mean that the word '*fāsiq*' is used for him, because before this incident, Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah had not done any such thing on account of which he could be referred to as *fāsiq*. An analysis of the incident of Banul-Muṣṭaliq indicates that he conveyed an incorrect information about that tribe which, acting in good faith, he thought was true whereas in reality it was not. Therefore, the plain import of the current verse would be that it simply establishes the general rule that the news conveyed by a *fāsiq* would be unacceptable. However, it may be emphasized that Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah was not a *fāsiq*, but his information, because of strong external context, did not seem acceptable. As a result, the Holy Prophet ﷺ refrained from taking any measures merely on his information, and sent Khālid Ibn Walīd رضي الله عنه for proper investigation. If this is the case of the news conveyed by a *bona fide* reliable and righteous person, then with the stronger reason a *fāsiq's* news should be rejected and should not be acted upon. The truthfulness of the Companions is discussed fully by this author in his book "The Status of the Companions" which is already published in Urdu. It will partly be discussed under forthcoming verses 9-10.

Verses 7 - 8

وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ فِيْكُمْ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ ؕ لَوْ يُطِيْعُكُمْ فِىْ كَثِيْرٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ
لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ حَبَّبَ اِلَيْكُمُ الْاِيْمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهٗ فِىْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَ كَرَّهَ
اِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوْقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الرّٰشِدُوْنَ ﴿۷﴾
فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَنِعْمَةً ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿۸﴾

And know that among you there is the Messenger of Allah. If he obeys you in many a matter, you will certainly fall into hardship. But Allah has endeared to you the Faith, and caused it to look beautiful to your hearts, and made detestable to you the disbelief and sins and disobedience. Such people are rightly guided, [7] **as a grace from Allah, and as a blessing. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.** [8]

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ Decision is Better

According to the previous verse, Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah reported that

Banul-Musṭaliq had turned apostate and refused to pay Zakāh. At this the blessed Companions were disturbed and infuriated. They expressed the view that *jihād* should be declared on them immediately, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ rejected his report on the basis of strong circumstantial evidence to the contrary. He sent Khālid Ibn Walīd رضي الله عنه for investigation. In the foregoing verse, the Qur'ān enjoined that if there are strong reasons to doubt the report conveyed by any person, it is not lawful to act upon it before investigation. In this verse the noble Companions are given one more guideline: 'Although when you heard the news about Banul-Mustaliq's apostasy, you reacted the way you reacted, and that was on account of your religious zeal and enthusiasm, yet your view was not right and proper. The decision taken by the Holy Prophet ﷺ proved to be better (Maẓharī). Thus in matters requiring consultation it is proper to express a view but it is not proper for you to exert efforts to get the Holy Prophet ﷺ to act upon your opinion. Although there is a rare possibility that an opinion expressed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in some worldly matters comes to be against worldly expedience, and this is not contrary to the station of his prophethood, yet Allah has gifted him with such insight, perspicacity and discernment which you do not have. Therefore, if the Holy Prophet ﷺ were to follow your opinion, in many matters, you will suffer loss and fall into difficulties. If rarely ever your opinion is right or proper, it is still better to abandon your opinion and obey the Holy Prophet ﷺ. By doing so it is possible that you may suffer some worldly loss, but it would not be as harmful as his following your opinion. In this case, even if you suffer any worldly loss, the reward of obedience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a better compensation.

Lexically, the word عَنِتُّم is derived from عَنَت and it connotes "to commit a sin or crime" and it also means "to suffer from hardship". In this context, both connotations appropriately fit (Qurṭubī).

Verses 9 - 10

وَإِنْ طَآئِفَتٰنِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اقْتَتَلُوْا فَاَصْلِحُوْا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ فَإِنْۢ بَغَتْ
اِحْدٰىهُمَا عَلَى الْاُخْرٰى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِيْ تَبْغِيْ حَتّٰى تَفِيْٓءَ اِلٰٓى اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ ۚ
فَاِنْ فَآءَتْ فَاَصْلِحُوْا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَاَقْسِطُوْا ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ

الْمُقْسِطِيْنَ ﴿٩﴾ اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ اِخْوَةٌ فَاَصْلِحُوْا بَيْنَ اَخَوَيْكُمْ ج
وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ ع

And if two groups of the believers fight each other, seek reconciliation between them. And if one of them commits aggression against the other, fight the one that commits aggression until it comes back to Allah's command. So if it comes back, seek reconciliation between them with fairness, and maintain justice. Surely Allah loves those who maintain justice. [9] **All believers are but brothers, therefore seek reconciliation between your two brothers, and fear Allah, so that you may be blessed with mercy.** [10]

Linkage

In the foregoing verses the rights of the Prophet ﷺ were set out. They also laid down the mannerism in which he should be treated. The verses prohibited any act that would annoy or hurt him. Now this set of verses [9-10] establishes the manners, mores, injunctions, and mutual rights and obligations to be observed in individual and social life. The common value of all these rules is to avoid causing any inconvenience to the members of the society.

Occasion of Revelation

The commentators have narrated several incidents as a background of the revelation of these verses. Among them is the clash that took place between two Muslim groups. It is not inconceivable that the totality of these incidents might have been the occasion of revelation. It is also possible that one of these incidents has been the cause of revelation and the other incidents, being similar, were also termed as the occasion of revelation.

Although the immediate addressees of this verse are rulers and those in authority who have the means to fight and wage war, [as stated by Abū Ḥayyān in Al-Baḥr and preferred by 'Ālusī in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī] all Muslims are addressed in this verse indirectly to assist those in authority in this matter. Where there is no leader, 'amir, king or president, the rule is that the two warring parties should be advised, as far as possible, to cease war. If this is not possible, common people are ordered to stay away from both warring groups: they should neither oppose nor aid any one of them.

[Bayān-ul-Qur'ān].

Related Issues and Injunctions

There are several forms of mutual fighting between two Muslim parties: [1] both parties are subjects of a Muslim government; [2] neither of the parties is the subject of a Muslim government; [3] one of the parties is the subject of a Muslim government, but not the other. In the first case, it is compulsory for common Muslims to bring about an understanding between them and try to stop the mutual fighting. If they do not cease fighting by negotiations, then it is imperative for the Muslim ruler to take measures against them. If both parties cease fighting by the intervention of the Islamic government, then the laws of retaliation, retribution and blood-wit will apply. If they do not cease, then both parties will be treated like rebels. If one of the parties withdrew and the other persisted in oppression and transgression, then the persistent group will be treated like a rebel group. The obedient group will be designated as "*'Adil*" (just). The detailed laws pertaining to rebels may be perused in books of Islamic law. Briefly, the law comprehends the following: Before fighting, their weapons must be seized and confiscated. Then they must be arrested and kept in prison until they repent. Neither in the course of fighting nor after fighting should their children be enslaved. Their wealth should not be treated like the spoils of war. In fact, their wealth will be held in trust until they repent. After repentance their belongings will be returned to them. In the above verses, we come across the following directive:

فَإِنْ فَآءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا

'...So if it comes back, seek reconciliation between them with fairness, and maintain justice.' [49:9]

It means that if the belligerent party ceases fighting, then do not only stop fighting but also think about eliminating the cause of war and mutual dissatisfaction, so that the heart-burnings may come to an end. All enmity and hostilities will thus cease and an atmosphere of brotherhood may prevail for all times to come. Since these people have fought against the Muslim ruler, it was possible that they would not be treated by him equitably. Therefore, the Qur'ān lays stress on setting things right between them equitably and justly, so that the rights of no one are violated [Adapted from Bayān-ul-Qur'ān with reference to Hidāyah].

Ruling

If a very powerful group of Muslims revolts against the Muslim ruler, then it is necessary for the ruler to first hear out their complaint or cause of their dissatisfaction. If a doubt or a misunderstanding has arisen in their mind about some matter, it should be removed. If they show such cause on the basis of which it is permissible in Sharī'ah to oppose a Muslim leader or ruler, like unjust behavior on the part of the government, it is essential for the general body of Muslims to assist the group, so that the leader or ruler may refrain from his tyranny, provided that his tyranny is proved beyond any shadow of doubt (Ibn-ul-Humam; Maẓharī). If they cannot show any clearly legitimate reason for their dissatisfaction, revolt, disobedience, and waging war against the Muslim ruler, it is permitted for Muslims to wage war against the rebels. Imām Shafi'ī رحمه الله تعالى held that the Muslims should not initiate fight against the rebels unless they first start the fight [Maẓharī]. This law applies when it is positively and unquestionably clear that the group is rebellious. However, if it is difficult to determine which group is rebellious and which is just, because each party has a valid Shar'ī argument to justify its course of action, then the pros and cons of both parties may be weighed to determine the party that is "just" on the principle of probability. If the juristic argument of one party seems to someone more convincing, it is permitted for him to assist such a group. If someone cannot prefer the standpoint of any one of them, he should remain neutral, as it happened in the civil wars of the Battle of Camel and the Battle of Siffin when many noble Companions remained aloof.

Conflicts of the Noble Companions ﷻ

Imām Abū Bakr Ibn-ul-'Arabī says that this verse of battle between Muslims covers all cases. It includes the case where both parties prepare for war on grounds of a principle of Sharī'ah. Civil wars of the noble Companions ﷻ were of this nature. Qurṭubī, quoting this view of Ibn-ul-'Arabi, explains the actual situation of the Battle of Camel and the Battle of Siffin and gives guidelines for later generations of Muslims to follow in the light of the battles of the blessed Companions. This author has dealt with this subject in "Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān" in Arabic and his Urdu book "Maqāme-Ṣaḥābah".The summary of the discussion given in that book with reference to Qurṭubī (V.16, P.322) is as follows:

It is not permitted to attribute categorically, and with certainty,

to any of the Companions that he was absolutely wrong in his action, because each of them acted according to his own Ijtihād. Their objective was to seek the pleasure of Allah. The Companions are all our leaders, and it is enjoined upon us that we should hold back our tongue from talking about their mutual differences, and always speak the best things about them. Prophet's companionship is a highly honourable position which should not be violated. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited to revile them or talk bad about them, and informed us that they have been forgiven and that Allah is pleased with them. Besides, there is the *Hadith* regarding Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah ؓ reaching us through several transmitting authorities that:

ان طلحة شهيد يمشى على وجه الارض

"Ṭalḥah is a martyr walking on the face of the earth."

If Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah ؓ was committing a clear sin by going out to wage war against Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ, he could not attain the high status of a martyr. In the same way, if his act might be regarded as a failure to perform his duty on the basis of a clearly wrong interpretation, he would still not attain the status of martyrdom. Martyrdom is attained only when a person is killed in obedience of Allah. Therefore, it is necessary to construe the matter of the Companions in terms of the principle mentioned above.

Another proof of this is available in authentic and well-established *Aḥādīth* which are reported by Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ himself where the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "The killer of Zubair is in Hell." Furthermore, Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ reports that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Give news to the killer of Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah's رضى الله عنها son that he will be in Hell." In the light of this we need to believe that Sayyidnā Zubair ؓ and Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah ؓ were not sinners or disobedient to Allah in the position taken by them in the battle. Otherwise the Holy Prophet ﷺ would not have referred to Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah ؓ as a martyr, nor would he predict about the killer of Zubair that he would be in Hell. Also, he is counted among the ten who were given the glad tidings of attaining Paradise. Traditions relating to this subject have almost reached the grade of continuity [*tawātur*] and the Traditions are referred to as *ḥadīth mutawātir*.

Likewise the noble Companions, who did not participate in the battles on either side, cannot be regarded as defaulters because their behaviour,

conduct and attitude in this matter was also based on their *ijtihād*, and Allah maintained them thus. Therefore, it is not proper in any sense of the word to curse them, to taunt them, to hold them as sinners, and to neglect their virtues, their struggles and their great religious stations. Some of the scholars were posed the question: what is your view regarding the blood that was shed in the battles that took place among the blessed Companions? They simply recited the following verse of the Qur'ān:

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْئَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

> 'Those are a people who have passed away. For them what they earned, and for you what you earned. And you shall not be questioned as to what they have been doing. [2:134]'

The same question was posed to another scholar. He replied: "Allah saved my hands from being soiled with that blood. Now I will not soil my tongue with it." He meant that he does not wish to make the mistake of categorically adjudging any one of the groups as the defaulter.

'Allāmah Ibn-Fuwarrak رحمه الله تعالى says:

> "Some of our colleagues feel that the example of the conflicts that took place between the noble Companions is like that of the episodes of conflict that occurred between Sayyidnā Yūsuf عليه السلام and his brothers. They, despite their mutual differences, did not lose their status of *wilāyah* and *nubuwwah*. The same principle applies to the matter of conflicts that occurred between the Companions."

Sayyidnā Muḥasibi رحمه الله تعالى says: "As far as this blood-shed is concerned, it is difficult for us to say anything because there was a difference of opinion in this regard among the noble Companions themselves."

When Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى was asked the question concerning the wars between the noble Companions, he replied:

> "Those were fights in which the Companions were present and we were not. They knew all the circumstances and we do not know them. The matter in which the Companions are unanimous, we follow; and the matter in which there is difference of opinion, we observe silence."

Sayyidnā Muhasibi رحمه الله تعالى says:

"We concur with Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى. We know that when the noble Companions meddled in any matter, they knew fully well why they were doing it. Our task is merely to follow them where they are unanimous, and where they differ we observe silence. We should not on our own introduce new ideas. We are assured that they must have exercised *ijtihād* and sought the pleasure of Allah. Therefore, in matters of religion they are all beyond doubt."

Verses 11

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَكُونُوا۟ خَيْرًا
مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَآءٌ مِّن نِّسَآءٍ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ ۖ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوٓا۟
أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا۟ بِٱلْأَلْقَٰبِ ۖ بِئْسَ ٱلِٱسْمُ ٱلْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ ٱلْإِيمَٰنِ ۚ
وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

O those who believe, no men should ever mock at other men, since it is possible that the latter are better than the former, nor (should) women (ever mock) at other women, since it is possible that the latter women are better than the former ones. And do not find fault with one another, nor call one another with bad nicknames. Bad is the name of sinfulness after embracing Faith. * **And whoever does not repent, such people are the wrongdoers.** [11]

Prohibition of Ridiculing One Another

The beginning part of this chapter laid down the Prophet's ﷺ rights and the etiquettes to be observed when dealing with him. Then the Holy Qur'ān has started mentioning the mutual rights and good manners for the general body of Muslims to be observed among themselves. The injunctions laid down in the preceding two verses related to the collective reformation of the society. Now the current verse mentions the rights and etiquettes to be observed between individuals. Thus the verse prohibits three social evils: [1] ridiculing one another; [2] finding fault with one

(*). It means that calling others with bad nicknames is a sinful act, and the real bad name for a person after embracing Faith is that he is known among people for sinful acts. Therefore, if a Muslim commits the sin of calling others with bad nicknames, and it is known among people, then the real bad name is earned by himself, and not by the person whom he has abused with that nickname. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

another; and [3] reviling one another with nicknames.

According to Qurṭubī, mocking or scoffing does not only connote mocking with the tongue, but it also implies mimicking someone, making pointed references to him, laughing at his words, his works, his appearance, his dress or calling people's attention to some of his defects, so that they may laugh at him. Mocking includes all of this. By the clear text of the Qur'ān, poking fun at someone or ridiculing him is absolutely forbidden.

Stylistically, the Qur'ān has, on this occasion, addressed men and women separately. Men are referred to as *qawm*, a word that is specifically reserved for male members of the human society, though by extension the word most often includes the female members of the human society as well. The Qur'ān, however, generally employs the word *qawm* for both men and women, but here it is specifically used for men in contradistinction to the word *nisa'* which specifically refers to women. Here both men and women are reminded that mocking one another is a disdainful and evil act. They must refrain from it, because it is very likely that the man who is mocked at may be better than the mocking person and the woman who is mocked at may be better than the mocker. Here the Qur'ān prohibits men from mocking other men, and women from mocking other women. This, however, does not mean that it is permitted for men to mock at women or for women to mock at men. The actual reason for making separate mention of the two sexes is that Islam does not allow free intermingling of the two sexes. Ridiculing each other generally occurs where there is such an intermingling. Therefore, in a Muslim society it is inconceivable that men would mock a woman or women would mock a man in an intermingling situation.

In short: no one dare make mockery of a person whose body, face, shape and stature are defective, imperfect, impaired or deformed, because he does not know that the other person, in the sight of Allah, might be better than him on account of his sincerity and purity of heart. When the righteous predecessors heard this verse, they adopted a conducive attitude: For example, Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn Shurahbil رضي الله عنه said that he would not laugh at a person when he sees him drink milk direct from the udders of a goat, lest he should become one like him. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه said: "I would not like to scoff at a dog, lest I be

metamorphosed into a dog (Qurṭubī)."

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah does not look at your faces and your wealth; He looks at your hearts and your works." Qurṭubī derives a legal maxim from this tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that in any matter it is not proper to pass a categorical judgment on the basis of overt evidence or circumstances, because it is possible that a person's overt actions might seem to be good but in the sight of Allah, on account of the insincerity and impurity of his heart, they could be bad, as He is fully aware of the inner state of people's hearts. On the contrary, a person's overt actions might seem to us bad, but in the sight of Allah, on account of the sincerity and purity of his heart, they could serve as an expiation of the bad actions, as He is fully aware of the inner state of people's heart.

The next thing that is prohibited in the verse is *lamz* which connotes to find fault with someone or to upbraid him. The verse says, وَلَا تَلْمِزُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ literally it means, "Do not find fault with your selves." But the intention is: "Do not find fault with one another-" [49:11] as is seen in the translation above. This expression is similar to the expression لَا تَقْتُلُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ '...And do not kill yourselves - [4:29]'. Although the verse commands "do not kill yourselves", it purports to say "do not kill one another". This expression indicates that, from one point of view, killing another person amounts to killing oneself. Often it happens that if one person kills another person, the victim's supporters kill the murderer. Even if this does not happen, a Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. Killing one's brother is like killing oneself and rendering oneself crippled, helpless and powerless. Similarly, the expression لَا تَلْمِزُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ 'and not find fault with yourselves' means when you find fault with others and upbraid them, others will find fault with you and upbraid you, because no man is normally free from any fault. Scholars have formulated the maxim: وفیک عیوب وللناس اعین "You have faults and people have eyes" with which they see them. Thus if someone seeks out the imperfections of some other person and broadcasts them, the latter will do the same in return. If, however, he exercises patience and evades retaliation to his verbal attacks, it comes down to the same thing: If one considers carefully, he will find that defaming and despising one's Muslim brother is actually casting aspersions on oneself.

Scholars have suggested that the satisfaction, well-being and happiness of man lies in examining his own faults and finding ways of mending them. This approach to life will give him no time to find fault with others and broadcast it. How well the last king of India Bahadur Shah Zafar has versified it!

نہ تھی حال کی جب ہمیں اپنی خبر، رہے دیکھتے لوگوں کے عیب و ہنر
پڑی اپنی بُرائیوں پر جو نظر، تو جہان میں کوئی بُرا نہ رہا

As long as we were unaware of our own faults, we looked into the faults and failings of others; But when we looked at our own faults there remained no one faulty in the world.

The third thing that is prohibited in the verse is reviling one another with nicknames which are offensive to them, e.g. calling a person lame, hands cropped, blind or one-eyed; or referring to him by other offensive nicknames. Sayyidnā Abū Jabirah Anṣārī ﵁ says, "This verse was revealed in connection with us. When we migrated to Madinah, most of us had two or three names. Some of them were popularised in order to denigrate, defame or belittle the bearer of the name. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was not aware of this situation; as a result he sometimes called them by one of these offensive names unwittingly. The noble Companions informed the Prophet ﷺ that the name offends the bearer of that name. This verse was revealed on that occasion." Sayyidnā Ibn-'Abbās ﵁ says that prohibition of *tanābuz bil-alqāb* means that if a person committed a sin or performed an evil deed from which he repented and mended his ways, it is unlawful for anyone to call him by denigrating names, such as thief, an adulterer, a drunkard or any such name. The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Anyone who denigrates a Muslim who has committed a sin of which he has repented, Allah takes it upon Himself that He will get the person to commit the very same sin and expose him to embarrassment and humiliation in this world and in the Hereafter [Qurṭubī].

Exception to the Rule

There are some nicknames, which though apparently offensive, are not intended to defame or insult the bearer of that name, but they rather serve as a symbol of identification. That is why scholars have permitted to attach titles to the names of the traditionalists - like *A'raj* [lame, cripple]

or *ahdab* [humpbacked, hunchbacked] provided they are not intended to insult or defame. The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself named a Companion *dhul-yadain* because his hands were relatively long. 'Abdullāh Ibn Mubārak was posed the question: " In the *asanid* [chains of authorities on which a tradition is based] we come across names to which are attached titles like Hamid At-Tawil [Hamid, the Tall], Sulaimān al-A'mash [Sulaimān the weak-eyed] and

Marwān al-Asfar [Marwān, the Yellow]: are these titles allowed?" He replied: " If your intention is not to insult or defame, but rather to complete identification, it is permitted." [Qurtubī]

It is Sunnah to call people by Good Titles

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that it is the right of a believer to call his fellow-believers by good names and titles which they like the best. Therefore the use of *kunniyyah* [agnomen/cognomen] had become commonplace in Arabia. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also favoured this, and consequently he himself bestowed appropriate titles on some of the individual Companions, e.g. Abū Bakr Siddiq رضي الله عنه received the title of *'Atīq* [the noble], Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه, the title of *Fārūq* [he who distinguishes truth from falsehood], Sayyidnā Hamzah the title of *Asadullāh* [the lion of Allah] and Khālid Ibn Walīd, the title of *Saifullāh* [the sword of Allah].

Verse 12

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ٱجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ ٱلظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ ٱلظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا
تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ
لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

O those who believe, abstain from many of the suspicions. Some suspicions are sins. And do not be curious (to find out faults of others), and do not backbite one another. Does one of you like that he eats the flesh of his dead brother? You would abhor it. And fear Allah. Surely Allah is Most-Relenting, Very-Merciful. [12]

Analysis of the Verse

This verse too comprises injunctions relating to mutual rights and manners to be observed in social life. It prohibits three things: [1] *ẓann* [unfounded suspicion], the details to follow: [2] *tajassus* [spying, looking secretly into the faults of others]; and [3] *ghibah* [backbiting, speaking ill of a person behind his back which if he heard would hurt or injure his feelings].

[1] Prohibition of Unfounded Suspicion

Ẓann primarily denotes assumption on probable evidence. In the first instance, the Qur'ān sets down "Abstain from many of the suspicions." and gives reason for that: "some suspicion are sins.". This shows that not all types of suspicion is a sin. Thus it is incumbent on the readers to investigate which type is a sin, so that they may avoid it. If the uneasy feeling and the conviction that something is wrong, someone is guilty, or some danger is afoot is based on partial evidence, and not confirmed by out-and-out evidence, it is not permitted to act on it. Scholars and jurists have given a detailed account of it. Qurṭubī says that in this context *Ẓann* connotes "accusation", that is, a charge of wrongdoing, as with guilt, crime, offense or blame without any strong evidence. Imām Abū Bakr Jaṣṣāṣ in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān gives the following details. *Ẓann* is divisible into four categories. [1] prohibited; [2] imperative; [3] recommended, desirable; and [4] permissible. Distrust of Allah or suspecting His trust is prohibited. For instance, it is not permitted to think ill of Allah in that He will punish him or keep him in calamity all the time without forgiving him or showing mercy to him, thus despairing of His grace. Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

لا يموتنّ احدكم الّا وهو يحسن الظنّ باللّٰه

"None of you should die without having favourable thoughts about Allah."

According to another *ḥadīth*, Allah Ta'ālā says:

اَنَا عند ظنّ عبدی بی

"I treat my servants the way they think about me."

This shows that holding favourable thoughts about Allah is compulsory and thinking ill of Him is prohibited. Likewise it is prohibited

to entertain suspicion, without rational grounds, about Muslims whose outer conditions show that they are good and noble.

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

اياكم والظّنّ فانّ الظّنّ اكذب الحديث

"Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false talks...".

In this context, *Ẓann* by common consent of scholars stands for thinking ill of a Muslim without any concrete proof. However, if there is a matter in which it is necessary to take a decision in either way, and there is no absolute and clear-cut proof based on the Qur'ān and Sunnah for that particular situation, it is imperative to act on the strength of the best possible assessment, termed in Islamic jurisprudence as '*Aẓ-ẓann-ul-ghalib*' This is the approved practice in cases that come to the law-courts for settlement. In a court of law, a judge has to deliver his decision on the basis of the principle of "the best possible assessment" relying on the testimony of people worthy of confidence, even though there is the possibility that one of the witnesses at that particular moment might have lied. The testimony of the witness is based on "best assessment" and not on "absolute certainty". The judge does not have direct knowledge of the facts of the matter, nor is there a transparent text of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. In cases like these where one or the other decision has to be taken, and the absolute knowledge of the reality cannot possibly be attained, there is no way out but to formulate a judgement on the basis of 'best possible assessment.'

Likewise when the direction of *qiblah* is not known, nor is there a person that can show one the direction of *qiblah,* it is compulsory for him to determine it on the basis of "best possible assessment". If a person has destroyed a valuable thing of someone, and a compensation has been imposed on him, he is liable to pay the value of it on the basis of 'best possible assessment'.

The example of permissible *Ẓann* is like that of a person performing prayers and in the course of it suspects whether he has performed three *rak'āt* or four, he is permitted to apply the 'best possible assessment' and complete the prayers accordingly. If, however, he does not wish to apply this principle, but wishes to act on the principle of 'certainty', thinking

that he has certainly performed three *rak'āt*, and thus completes the fourth one, that too is possible.

And desirable *Ẓann* refers to having favourable thoughts about every Muslim. That is rewardable [condensed from Jaṣṣāṣ].

Qurṭubī quotes the Qur'ānic verse

لَوْلَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوْهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتُ بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا

'...why, when you (O believers,) heard of it, did the believing men and women not think well on their own selves - [24:12]'.

This verse emphasizes to have good thoughts about the believers. The following aphorism apparently seems contrary to this rule:

انّ من الحزم سوء الظّنّ

"It is prudence to have ill thoughts about every person."

But this means to be as precautious when dealing with others as one would deal in suspicious cases: e.g. one should not hand over one's thing to anyone without strong reliance. It does not mean that he should regard anyone as a thief or run him down. In brief, one should take precautionary measures in the predicament one is placed in without labeling people as thieves or perfidious.

[2] Prohibition of Spying

The second social evil that is prohibited in the verse is *tajassus*, spying or prying secretly into the faults of others. An alternative reading of تَجَسُّس *tajassus* [with "*J*"] is تَحَسُّس *taḥassus* [with "*H*"]. In a *ḥadīth* recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥain* on the authority of Abū Hurairah ﷺ the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

لَا تَجَسَّسُوْا وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوْا

"...do not spy on one another; do not look for other's faults...".

The two words in Arabic are near-synonyms. *Akhfash* draws attention to the nuances or subtle differences in their meaning: *tajassus* connotes looking into the affairs of people which they have kept hidden, whilst *taḥassus* connotes searching in general as in the following verse of the Holy Qur'ān.

تَحَسَّسُوْا مِنْ يُّوْسُفَ وَ اَخِيْهِ

'...search for Yūsuf and his brother' - [12:87]

However, the term *taḥassus* [searching], like *tajassus* [spying], could have an evil connotation in which case the Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited it. The verse signifies that one may take into account what is presented in evidence, but it is not permitted to search for faults that are not overt. The Holy Prophet ﷺ says:

لا تغتابوا المسلمين ولا تتّبعوا عوراتهم فان من اتبعّ عوراتهم يتبع الله عورته ومن يتّبع الله عورته يفضحه في بيته (قرطبى)

> "Do not speak ill of Muslims behind their backs, and do not search out their faults, for he who searches out their faults will have his faults searched out by Allah, and he whose faults are searched out by Allah will be exposed by Him, even though he should be in the interior of his house" [Qurṭubī].

Bayān-ul-Qur'ān interprets that *tajassus* [spying] and *taḥassus* [searching] include the sense of listening to people without their permission when they are talking, or eavesdropping at their doors. However, if there is an apprehension that some member of the Muslim community may be harmed by some mischief-makers, it is permitted for others to spy to protect the innocent and peaceful people, and search furtively for the intentions and conspiracies of such people who are a danger to the society.

[3] Prohibition of Backbiting

The third social evil this verse prohibits is *ghibah* [backbiting]. This connotes speaking ill of a person behind his back which if he heard would hurt or injure his feelings, even if what was said about him was the truth; if what was said about him was untruth, it is slander or false accusation. The prohibition of slander is prohibited elsewhere in the Qur'ān. In the definition of backbiting the phrase "behind his back / in his absence" appears. This does not mean that it is permissible to say hurtful things in the presence of somebody. This may not be backbiting, but it certainly falls under *lamz* which is prohibited in the preceding verse.

اَيُحِبُّ اَحَدُكُمْ اَنْ يَّاْكُلَ لَحْمَ اَخِيْهِ مَيْتًا

> (Does one of you like that he eats the flesh of his dead brother? - 49:12)

This verse sternly warns against disgracing a Muslim and compares it to eating the flesh of a human being. If the victim of disgrace is present

before the offender, it is like eating the flesh of a living person, and the Holy Qur'ān has termed it as '*lamz*' which is prohibited in verse 11, as well as in another Sūrah by saying,

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

'Woe to every backbiter, derider [104:1]'

And if the victim is not present, and someone speaks ill of him in a way that he is insulted, then it is like eating the flesh of a dead human being. Just as it does not cause any physical torture to a dead body, backbiting does not hurt the victim when he is not aware of it, but just as eating the flesh of a dead body is an extremely inhuman act, so is the backbiting. Both are prohibited. Otherwise also, speaking ill of someone in his absence is an unkind, mean and malicious act; it is not an act of valour and bravery.

This verse prohibits three social evils: unfounded suspicion, unjustifiable search for faults and backbiting. However, backbiting is most severely and harshly condemned. It is compared to eating the flesh of a dead Muslim, thus bringing out the gravity of its prohibition, unkindness and meanness. The wisdom of it lies in the fact that saying hurtful things to the face of someone is prohibited, but the man, being present, will be able to defend himself. Further, for fear of defense not everybody will have the courage to utter hurtful things to the face of someone, and usually it does not last long. It is unlike backbiting where there is no one to defend it, and thus the most mean person would pluck the courage to backbite the greatest of men. Because it is not defended, generally the ball keeps rolling, and more and more people get involved. Therefore, backbiting is prohibited most severely and harshly. It is necessary for the general body of Muslims to defend their brother, if possible, when people speak ill of him in his absence. If that is not possible, they should at least abstain from listening to it, because listening to it willfully and intentionally is like backbiting itself.

Some Issues Related to Backbiting

Sayyidnā Maimūn ﷺ says that once he saw in a dream that there is a dead body of a Negro. A caller addressed him and said: "Eat this." Sayyidnā Maimūn ﷺ says: "I said: 'O servant of God! Why should I eat this?'". The caller replied: "Because you have been backbiting a certain

person's Negro slave." Sayyidnā Maimūn ﷺ said: "By God, I did not do that." The caller replied: "Yes, you did: you listened to people backbiting him and remained silent as if you were in agreement with them." After this dream, Sayyidnā Maimūn ﷺ composed himself and he himself stopped backbiting and he did not allow anyone else in his presence to backbite.

In a narration of Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ﷺ relating to Holy Prophet's ﷺ experience of Mi'rāj , the Messenger of Allah said: "When I was taken up to the heaven, I passed by people who had fingernails of copper and were scratching their faces and breasts violently. I asked Jibra'īl : 'Who are these people?' He replied: 'They are those people who were given to backbiting their brothers and who aspersed their honour.' [transmitted by al-Baghawī as cited in Maẓharī]. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd and Jābir ﷺ report that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

> "Backbiting is worse than adultery. The noble Companions inquired: 'How so, Messenger of Allah?' He replied: 'A person may commit fornication, repent of it and his sin is forgiven. But the sin of backbiting is not forgiven unless the injured party forgives.'" [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd, as cited in Maẓharī].

This *ḥadīth* indicates that backbiting is not only a violation of the Divine right, but also a violation of human right. Therefore, it is necessary to seek the forgiveness of the injured party. Some of the scholars express the view that backbiting does not become a human right unless the injured party comes to know about it. Therefore, seeking his pardon is not necessary [Quoted in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī from Ḥasan, Al-Khayyāṭī, Ibn-uṣ-ṣabbāgh, An-Nawawī, Ibn-uṣ-ṣalāh, Az-Zarakshī, Ibn 'Abd-ul-Barr from Ibn-ul-Mubārak]. This is quoted in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān and explained as follows: If the victim of backbiting is not aware that someone has spoken ill of him, it might not be necessary for the backbiter to beg pardon of the victim, but it is necessary that he falsifies himself before the person whom he addressed when backbiting, or at least confesses his guilt before him. If the victim is dead or has disappeared, the atonement is recorded in a narration of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ where the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

ان من كفّارة الغيبة ان يستغفر لمن اغتابه تقول اللّٰهمّ اغفرلنا وله

"The atonement of backbiting is to invoke forgiveness of Allah

for the victim in the following words: O Allah, forgive our sins and his sins". [Transmitted by Baihaqī and cited in Maẓharī].

Ruling [1]

It is prohibited to backbite children, insane and non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic state, because hurting them is prohibited. Hurting *ḥarbī* infidels who are the inhabitants of Dār-ul-Ḥarb [hostile country] is not prohibited. However, backbiting them, on account of wastage of time, is *makrūh*, and reprehensible.

Ruling [2]

Backbiting does not only connote speaking ill of a person behind his back, but it also connotes an action or pointed reference to him, as for instance if someone imitates the limp or uneven walking of a lame person to make fun of him, it is not permitted.

Ruling [3]

Some narrations show that the general prohibition of backbiting in the verse is subject to exceptions in special cases and specific circumstances. It is permitted if the need for backbiting is real and genuine from the Sharī'ah point of view. Examples are as follows:

[a] Complaining against a tyrant before a person who can relieve him from the tyranny and injustice.

[b] Complaining about the wife and children to the father and husband who can put them right.

[c] Giving a full account of the case in order to obtain a *fatwa* (ruling of Sharī'ah)

[d] Warning the Muslims of the mischief of a mischief-monger so that they may ward off the evil.

[e] When someone consults another person in any matter, it is obligatory for him to apprise him of all aspects, including weaknesses, so that he is not deceived because of ignorance.

[f] If a person commits sins openly and publishes his ungodly behaviour himself, it is not prohibited to make mention of his bad deeds. However, it is abominable and reprehensible to indulge in it on account of wastage of time [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān with reference to

Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī].

But the necessary condition for invoking these exceptions is that speaking ill of someone is not with the intention of insulting or disgracing him, but only to fulfill a genuine need.

Verse 13

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَّأُنثىٰ وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَّقَبَآئِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقٰكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female and made you into races and tribes, so that you may identify each other. Surely the noblest of you, in Allah's sight, is the one who is most pious of you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. [13]

All of Mankind are the Children of 'Ādam and Ḥawwā' عليهما السلام

In the preceding verses, six social evils in connection with human and Islamic rights were prohibited, and principles of good manners were laid down to be observed in social life. The current verse proceeds to set down the basis of an all-comprehensive and all-pervading principle of human equality. It has firmly laid the axe at the false and foolish notions of superiority, born of racial arrogance or national conceit. All men have been created from a single male ['Ādam عليه السلام] and a single female [Ḥawwā'] as human beings. Therefore, all people are the descendants of 'Ādam and Hawwa' عليهما السلام and have been declared equal in the sight of Allah. No one is allowed to take pride nor to degrade others on the basis of pigment of his skin, the amount of wealth he possesses or by his rank or by his social status, descent or pedigree, but by his moral uprightness and the way he discharges his obligations to Allah and man. The entire human race is but one family. Division into nations, tribes and sub-tribes of all sizes, and races is meant only to give a better identification of one another.

Circumstances of Revelation

This verse was revealed on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah. When it was time for prayer, the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked Sayyidnā Bilāl رضي الله عنه to call the *adhān*. One of the pagan Quraish cynically remarked:

Thank God that my father died before this happened, and he did not have to see this bad day. Ḥārith Ibn Hishām remarked: Could Muḥammad not find anyone better than this black crow to sound the *adhān* in the Sacred Mosque! Abū Sufyān said: I do not wish to utter anything for fear that the master of the heavens will inform him. Thus Jibra'īl ﷺ came down and informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ about this conversation. The Holy Prophet ﷺ called them and asked them about it. They admitted. At this, the current verse was revealed.

Taqwā of Allah is the basis of Honour

This verse made it plain that human beings can earn honour on account of their faith and righteousness. The immediate application of the verse was to Sayyidnā Bilāl رضي الله عنه, and therefore the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to those people: "You are empty (i.e. you have no moral leg to stand on.) Sayyidnā Bilāl رضي الله عنه, on the other hand, is equipped (with high moral qualities); and he is better and more honourable than any of you." [Baghawī, as cited in Maẓharī]. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه reports that on the day when Makkah was conquered, the Holy Prophet ﷺ performed *ṭawāf* (circumambulation of Ka'bah) in the state of riding on his she-camel, [so that all the people could see him]. Then having completed his *ṭawāf*, he delivered a sermon in which he said:

الحمد لله الّذی اذهب عنکم عبّیة الجاهلیة وتکبّرها. الناس رجلان برّ تقیّ کریم
علی اللّٰه وفاجر شقی هین علی اللّٰه ثم تلا: يَاۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّاخَلَقْنٰكُمْ (ترمذی وبغوی)

"O people! Allah has removed from you the pride of Jāhiliyyah and its arrogance. People are of two types: a man who is righteous, fearful of Allah and he is honourable to Allah; or a man who is sinful, wretched, and he is disgraced and little to Allah [Timidhī and Baghawī]."

Then he recited the current verse.

Sayyidnā Ibn-'Abbās رضي الله عنه says: For people "honour" lies in wealth, whilst in the sight of Allah it lies in righteousness.

Analysis of Important Words in the Verse

The word شُعُوبًا Shu'ūb is the plural of Sha'b which refers to a large group of persons of the same origin, (like a nation). Then it consists of clans and tribes. The largest group in this arrangement is called *sa'b*, and the smallest is called *'ashīrah*. Abū Ruwāq says that the words Shu'ūb

and Sha'b refer to non-Arab nations whose lineage is not preserved, whilst *qabāil* refers to Arabs whose lineage is well-preserved. The word *asbāt* is used to refer to the children of Israel.

Lineal, National and Linguistic Division of Mankind: The Underlying Divine Wisdom is identification

The Qur'ān in this verse has made it clear that Allah has created all mankind from a single mother and a single father, and made them into a single brotherhood. But he has divided them into different tribes, nations, races, lineage and language-speakers/linguistic groups. The underlying Divine wisdom in such a division is mutual identification. For example, if there are two persons bearing the same name, they could be differentiated by family name. It can also show the near and remote relations. Their Shar'ī rights can be fulfilled on the basis of near and distant lineage. It is incumbent to determine the near and remote agnate heirs when applying the law of succession or dividing the estate of a deceased. In short, reference to one's lineage for the purpose of identification is not deemed to be pride and conceit.

Verses 14 - 18

قَالَتِ الْاَعْرَابُ اٰمَنَّا ؕ قُلْ لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوْا وَلٰكِنْ قُوْلُوْۤا اَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا
يَدْخُلِ الْاِيْمَانُ فِىْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ ؕ وَاِنْ تُطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِّنْ
اَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوْا وَجٰهَدُوْا بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ فِىْ
سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الصّٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ اَتُعَلِّمُوْنَ اللّٰهَ بِدِيْنِكُمْ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَمُنُّوْنَ عَلَيْكَ اَنْ اَسْلَمُوْا ؕ قُلْ لَّا تَمُنُّوْا عَلَىَّ اِسْلَامَكُمْ ۚ
بَلِ اللّٰهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ اَنْ هَدٰىكُمْ لِلْاِيْمَانِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيْرٌ ۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾

The Bedouins say, "We have come to believe." Say, "You have not come to believe; instead you (should) say, 'We

have surrendered' and the belief has not entered your hearts so far. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not curtail (the reward of) any of your deeds in the least. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [14] **Believers, in fact, are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, then have no doubt, and struggle, with their riches and their lives, in the way of Allah. Those are the truthful.** [15] **Say, "Would you apprise Allah of your religion, while Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and Allah is All-Knowing about every thing?"** [16] **They oblige you that they have accepted Islam, (as if it was a favour shown to you). Say, "Do not oblige me for your accepting Islam. Rather, Allah makes you obliged for His having guided you to the Faith, if you are truthful.** [17] **Surely Allah knows the Unseen of the heavens and the earth, and Allah keeps in sight whatever you do.** [18]

Sequence of Verses in the Sūrah

In the preceding verses of the Sūrah it was stated that the basis of honour in the sight of Allah is righteousness which is an inner quality, and Allah alone knows it. It is improper for any man to claim self-sanctification. In the current set of verses, it is stated, on account of a particular incident, that the real basis of faith is the inner acceptance of the heart. Mere lip-service to faith does not count the person as a faithful believer. In the entire Sūrah, first the rights of the Prophet were set out and then the rules of how to respect and honour him. Next the individual and collective rights and rules of mannerism were set down to be applied in social life. Now at the conclusion of the Sūrah it is reiterated that in the Hereafter good deeds will be accepted and rewarded on the basis of faith, sincere belief of the heart and obedience to Allah and His Messenger.

Circumstances of Revelation

According to Imām Baghawī, this verse was revealed in connection with the tribe of Banu Asad. A few members of that tribe came up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in Madīnah during a severe drought. These people were not sincere believers. They had expressed their Islam merely to demand financial help from the Muslim *Ṣadaqāt* funds. As they were not believers in the real sense of the word, they were unaware of Islamic injunctions and manners. They spread filth and excrement on the streets of Madīnah. In the marketplaces they increased the prices of necessary items. First they made a false claim of faith in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ;

second they wanted to deceive him; and third they regarded their Islam as a favour to him. They said: "We embraced Islam without any conflict: we did not fight against you as did other tribes for a length of time and then they became Muslims; therefore you should value us." This was a sort of disrespect to the Messenger ﷺ, because they considered their Islam as a favour to him. Their sole purpose was to derive financial aid from the Muslim *Ṣadaqāt* funds, enrich themselves and eradicate their poverty. True and sincere faith is the most precious possession of a Muslim. By accepting Islam, he does no show a favour to anybody; on the contrary, it is a favour of Allah that he is guided to the Truth. On this occasion, the current set of verses was revealed in which their false claim is refuted and they have been taken to task for boasting of their so-called kindness and favour conferred upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

وَلٰكِن قُولُوٓا أَسْلَمْنَا ('...Say, 'We have surrendered'- 49:14). They had not achieved the reality of faith. Thus they were claiming falsely to be Muslims on the basis of their outward actions. The Qur'ān first negates their false claim of faith: You cannot claim "*āmannā*" ['We have come to believe']; the most you can say is "*aslamnā*" ['We have surrendered'], because the literal meaning of Islam is to recite the *kalimah* of Islam, enter the fold of the religion and surrender. Obviously, being devoid of the true spirit, this kind of Islam is mere superficial, not real and total. As far as faith is concerned, it is related to the real belief by heart. Therefore, mere verbal claim or lip-profession is meaningless, if it is not supported by the heart.

Lexical and Technical Analysis of the Concepts "Islām" and "'Īmān"

The foregoing discussion clarifies that the term "Islam" in this verse bears the literal meaning of outward submission and not the technical sense. Therefore, the verse does not show the technical difference between the terms "Islām" and "'Īmān".The two terms, technically, connote different senses. "'Īmān", in the technical sense of Sharī'ah, refers to the belief by heart and thus connotes a firm and unshakable belief in the Oneness of Allah and in His Messenger. "Islam", on the other hand, stands for complete surrender and obedience to Allah and His Messenger. However, "Islām" and "'Īmān" of a person need to complement each other. In Sharī'ah, the belief of the heart must manifest itself by performing

deeds outwardly, the least degree of which is to proclaim the *kalimah* of Islām verbally. But the outward performance of deeds is not recognised by Sharī'ah unless the faith goes deep down into his heart. Otherwise it would be hypocrisy. Thus in the original and final analysis "Islam" and "'Īmān" are different concepts. "'Īmān" is the inner quality of the heart and manifests outwardly whilst "Islām" starts out in outward actions and culminates in the inner sincere affirmation of the heart. But in terms of their goal, they are mutually necessary and complementary in that "'Īmān" without "Islām" is not possible, nor is "Islam" possible without "'Īmān". Hence, it is not true to say that "Muslim" and "*Mu'min*" are antonyms and mutually contradictory concepts. In Sharī'ah, it is not possible for a person to be a "Muslim" but not a "*Mu'min*" or be a "*Mu'min*" but not a "Muslim". However, this is possible only lexically, as is the case of all hypocrites who used to be treated like Muslims, because of their outward obedience of Islamic injunctions, but their hearts were devoid of sincere faith, belief and affirmation. They were not believers. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt
Ends here

Sūrah Qāf

This Sūrah Qāf is Makkī. It contains 45 verses and 3 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 15

قٓ ۚ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ الْمَجِيْدِ ﴿١﴾ بَلْ عَجِبُوْٓا اَنْ جَآءَهُمْ مُّنْذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَقَالَ
الْكٰفِرُوْنَ هٰذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيْبٌ ﴿٢﴾ ءَاِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ۚ ذٰلِكَ رَجْعٌ ۢ
بَعِيْدٌ ﴿٣﴾ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْاَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ ۚ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتٰبٌ حَفِيْظٌ
﴿٤﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيْٓ اَمْرٍ مَّرِيْجٍ ﴿٥﴾ اَفَلَمْ
يَنْظُرُوْٓا اِلَى السَّمَآءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنٰهَا وَزَيَّنّٰهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوْجٍ
﴿٦﴾ وَالْاَرْضَ مَدَدْنٰهَا وَاَلْقَيْنَا فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ
زَوْجٍ ۢ بَهِيْجٍ ﴿٧﴾ تَبْصِرَةً وَّذِكْرٰى لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنِيْبٍ ﴿٨﴾ وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ
السَّمَآءِ مَآءً مُّبٰرَكًا فَاَنْۢبَتْنَا بِهٖ جَنّٰتٍ وَّحَبَّ الْحَصِيْدِ ﴿٩﴾ وَالنَّخْلَ
بٰسِقٰتٍ لَّهَا طَلْعٌ نَّضِيْدٌ ﴿١٠﴾ رِّزْقًا لِّلْعِبَادِ ۙ وَاَحْيَيْنَا بِهٖ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا ؕ
كَذٰلِكَ الْخُرُوْجُ ﴿١١﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّاَصْحٰبُ الرَّسِّ
وَثَمُوْدُ ﴿١٢﴾ وَعَادٌ وَّفِرْعَوْنُ وَاِخْوَانُ لُوْطٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَّاَصْحٰبُ الْاَيْكَةِ
وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ ؕ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيْدِ ﴿١٤﴾ اَفَعَيِيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ
الْاَوَّلِ ؕ بَلْ هُمْ فِيْ لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ﴿١٥﴾

Qāf. (I swear) by the glorious Qur'ān, (you are sent as a messenger.) [1] But they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves, so the disbelievers said, "This is something strange. [2] Is it when we die and become dust (that we will be brought to life again?) That is a return, far (from understanding)." [3] We know very well how much of them is diminished by the earth, and We have a Book that records every thing. [4] Rather, they rejected the truth when it came to them; so they are in a confused state. [5] Did they not, then, look to the sky above them, how We have built it and beautified it, and it has no cracks? [6] And the earth–We have spread it out, and cast on it firm hills, and caused to grow therein every kind of delightful things, [7] as a source of vision and as a lesson to every slave (of Allah) who turns (to Him for guidance). [8] And We sent down blessed water from the sky, and caused to grow therewith gardens and grain of harvest, [9] and towering date palms that have spadices, put one upon another, [10] as a provision to the slaves (of Allah). And We gave life with it to a dead land. Similar will be the exit (of the dead from their graves). [11] It (resurrection) was rejected prior to them by the people of Nūḥ, and the people of Rass and Thamūd, [12] and 'Ād, and Fir'aun, and the brothers of Lūṭ, [13] and dwellers of Aykah, and the people of Tubba'. Each one of them rejected the messengers; so My threat came true. [14] Is it then that We were worn out by the first creation? No, but they are in confusion about the new creation. [15]

Linkage with the preceding Sūrah

This Sūrah mostly contains subjects relating to the Day of Judgment, Resurrection, the Reckoning, Paradise, the Fire, Allah's reward and punishment etc. Thus this Sūrah is linked with Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt because the concluding part of the latter Sūrah dealt with these subjects.

Characteristics and Virtues of Sūrah Qāf

It is reported in Muslim, as cited in Qurṭubī, that Umm Hishām Bint Ḥārithah Ibn Nu'mān رضى الله عنها said: "For around two years, or a year and a part of another year, we shared one single oven with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. I memorized Sūrah Qāf from the Holy Prophet ﷺ who used to recite it every Friday while standing on the pulpit delivering the Friday sermon to the people."

Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ asked Abū Wāqid Al-Laithī:

"What did the Holy Prophet ﷺ recite during the *'Īd* prayers?" He replied: "Sūrah Qāf and Sūrah Qamar." Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to recite Sūrah Qāf often in the morning prayer. (Despite that this Sūrah is rather long,) the prayer was felt light (Qurṭubī). It was the special trait of the recitation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that praying behind him caused no stress, even when he recited the long Sūrahs.

Is it Possible to Observe the Heaven?

اَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوْٓا اِلَى السَّمَآءِ (Did they not, then, look to the sky above them? - 50:6). Apparently this sentence indicates that it is possible to see the sky, while the general impression is that the blue colour that we see above is the colour of the atmosphere, and not that of the heaven. However, there is no proof for non-existence of the sky, nor of the presumption that the colour of the heaven is not blue. Besides, the word *naẓar* (seeing) used in the verse could mean perceiving through reason, that is, thinking, pondering etc. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

Removal of a Doubt relating to Resurrection

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْاَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ (We know very well how much of them is diminished by the earth,... 50:4). The disbelievers wondered at the idea that when they are dead and reduced to broken bones and particles of dust and scattered all over the world, whether it is possible that, on the Day of Resurrection, they will be raised up again. They thought that it was impossible when they are dead, disintegrated, with their organs torn apart that they will be brought back to their original shape and bodies. The verse refutes the disbelievers' objection: Allah says that He knows that which the earth takes of them, meaning He knows what the earth consumes of their dead bodies; where and how the bodies disintegrated, what they turned into and how they have become. Man's knowledge is limited and narrow in scope which should not be compared to Allah's vast, unlimited and encompassing knowledge - even the particles of objects which the earth disintegrates are well preserved in Allah's infinite knowledge. And a little reflection may reveal that even the body of a living person is composed of innumerable particles that have been joined together by Allah from different places. Whatever a person intakes in the form of food or medicine is derived from different parts of the earth, and all this forms part of his body. Then why should it be difficult for Him if He recollects all these parts after they are disintegrated? Not only this, he had a perfect and full knowledge of every man's destiny even before

creating him as to what transformation will come about in every moment of his life and what phases he will go through after his death. All this is precisely recorded in the Preserved Tablet.

It is astonishing indeed that the disbelievers wonder at Him whose knowledge is so perfect, full, complete and encompassing and whose power is so infinite and discount the possibility of Resurrection!

This interpretation of 'diminishing by earth' is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbas ﷺ, Mujāhid and majority of the interpreters (Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ).

فِيْ أَمْرٍ مَّرِيْجٍ (so they are in a confused state... 5). The word *Marīj*, (translated above as 'confused') means something mixed up with different elements. Such a thing generally becomes corrupt or spoiled. Therefore, Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ translates the word *marīj* as "corrupt". Sayyidnā Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah ﷺ, Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى and others interpret the word *marīj* to mean "in disarray, in a confused state". This is the state of those who deny the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: whatever they say and utter is no more than confusion. They are not even consistent in their claims. Sometimes they call the Holy Prophet ﷺ a sorcerer, at other times a poet; and yet at other times they refer to him as a soothsayer or an astrologer. They were so confused that they could not extricate themselves from their perplexity.

After mentioning the confused state of the infidels, Allah draws man's attention to His infinite power which He demonstrated by creating what is bigger than that which they wondered about and whose possibility they discounted. Referring to the heaven, the Qur'ān says: وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوْجٍ (...and it has no cracks...50:6). Lexically, the word *furūj* is the plural of *farj* which means a crack, or an opening. This and the following few verses draw attention to the marvels of Allah's creation, the wonderful design in the universe, and to the flawless celestial firmament. If this was made by man there would have been patches, cracks, clefts or rifts. But no one can find any sort of patchwork or stitching in the sky. This, however, does not negate the existence of doors in the heaven. A door is not referred to as a crack.

Consoling the Holy Prophet ﷺ

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّأَصْحٰبُ الرَّسِّ (It [resurrection] was rejected prior to them by the people of Nūḥ, and the people of Rass - 50:12). It was mentioned in the preceding verses that the infidels rejected the Prophethood of

Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ and the Hereafter. This obviously perturbed and upset him. In this verse Allah comforts him by narrating the stories of the previous prophets and their communities. Every community in the past persecuted their respective prophets. This was the behavior pattern of all disbelieving nations against their prophets throughout history. Thus the Holy Prophet ﷺ is consoled that he should not be disheartened by this behavior. The story of the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام is repeated several times in the Qur'ān in that the Holy Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام preached to his people for 950 years but in response they not only rejected him but also subjected him to various hardships.

Who are people of Rass?

Lexically, the word *rass* in Arabic has several meanings. Most prominently it refers to a well that has not been built by bricks or stones. People of Rass were the remnants of Thamūd who had remained alive after the punishment. Ḍaḥḥāk رحمه الله and other commentators narrate their story that follows. When the people of Ṣaliḥ عليه السلام were destroyed by Allah's punishment, a remnant [about 4000] of them escaped it, because they had reposed faith in him and obeyed him. They left their original place and took shelter in Ḥaḍramaut (a city in Yemen). Holy Prophet Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام was with them. They went to a well and stayed there. Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام passed away here; therefore this place is called *Ḥaḍara Maut* [death overcame] and the people settled there permanently.

Later their descendants took to idol-worship, to whom a prophet was sent to preach and reform, but they killed him. The community was annihilated by Divine punishment. Their well, on which their lives depended, was rendered useless; and their buildings and dwellings were desolated. The Qur'ān has described it in the following words, فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَبِئْرٍ "So, there they are, fallen down on heir roofs, and Chow many a deserted well ane well-built castle!" (22:45). For discerning eyes the abandoned well and desolate lofty palaces are sufficient to judge and decide on the consequences of one's deeds.

Thamūd

These are the people of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام whose story has been repeated several times in the Qur'ān.

'Ād

The nation of 'Ād was proverbial in their size, physical strength and power as well as the strength that came to them in the wake of their

increased wealth and children. Holy Prophet Hūd عليه السلام was sent to them. Eventually, they were annihilated by the Divine punishment of a wind storm.

Fir'aun

This is the title of the Egyptian king (The Pharaoh) notorious for his tyranny.

Brothers of Lūṭ

It means the community of the Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام, whose story is narrated several times in the Qur'ān.

Dwellers of Aikah

Aikah means a dense bush; wood; forest; jungle, These people resided in such a place. Holy Prophet Shu'aib عليه السلام was sent to this nation. They disobeyed him and were destroyed by Divine punishment.

People of Tubba'

Tubba' was the title of the king of Yemen. The necessary explanation has been given in volume seven in Sūrah Ad-Dukhān under [44:37].

Verses 16 - 29

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهٖ نَفْسُهٗ ۚ وَنَحْنُ اَقْرَبُ
اِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيْدِ ﴿١٦﴾ اِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيٰنِ عَنِ الْيَمِيْنِ وَعَنِ
الشِّمَالِ قَعِيْدٌ ﴿١٧﴾ مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ اِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيْبٌ عَتِيْدٌ ﴿١٨﴾
وَجَآءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ؕ ذٰلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيْدُ ﴿١٩﴾
وَنُفِخَ فِى الصُّوْرِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْوَعِيْدِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَجَآءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
مَّعَهَا سَآئِقٌ وَّشَهِيْدٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِىْ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هٰذَا فَكَشَفْنَا
عَنْكَ غِطَآءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيْدٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَالَ قَرِيْنُهٗ هٰذَا مَا لَدَىَّ
عَتِيْدٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ اَلْقِيَا فِىْ جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيْدٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ مَّنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ
مُّرِيْبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَاَلْقِيٰهُ فِى الْعَذَابِ
الشَّدِيْدِ ﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ قَرِيْنُهٗ رَبَّنَا مَآ اَطْغَيْتُهٗ وَلٰكِنْ كَانَ فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ بَعِيْدٍ

﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوْا لَدَىَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ اِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيْدِ ﴿٢٨﴾ مَا
يُبَدَّلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَىَّ وَمَآ اَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ ﴿٢٩﴾

And indeed We have created man, and We know whatever thoughts his inner self develops, and We are closer to him than (his) jugular vein, [16] **when the two receiving angels receive (every human act to record it), seated (one) on the right and (one) on the left.** [17] **Not a single word is uttered by one, but there is a watcher near him, ready (to record).** [18] **And the daze of death has (to) come with truth. That is what you tried to escape.** [19] **And the Horn will be blown. That will be the day of (which) threat (was given).** [20] **And everybody will come, along with one (angel) to drive (him to the field of reckoning) and one (angel) to testify (about his deeds).** [21] **"You were heedless of this. Now We have removed your veil from you; so your sight today is sharp."** [22] **And his companion (i.e. the angel who recorded his deeds) will say, "This is what I have with me, ready (to be presented as his record of deeds)."** [23] **(Then it will be said,) "Cast, both of you (O angels,) into Jahannam (hell) every stubborn disbeliever** [24] **who used to prevent (others) from good, who transgressed all bounds, who cast doubts (in true faith),** [25] **who set up another god along with Allah. So cast him (O angels) in the painful punishment."** [26] **His (evil) companion (i.e. the Satan) will say, "O our Lord, I did not cause him to rebel, but he was himself (involved) in straying far from the track.** [27] **He (Allah) will say, "Do not quarrel before Me, while I had sent to you My threat well in advance.** [28] **The Word is not changed with Me, and I Am not a wrongdoer to My slaves."** [29]

Linkage

The preceding verses purported to quell the doubt of those who denied the possibility of Resurrection and who thought that raising the dead was inconceivable. As a result, the unbelievers drew a false analogy between their finite knowledge and power and the infinite knowledge and power of Allah. Therefore, the perplexity arose in their mind: 'after we die, disintegrate, with our organs torn apart, our bodies reduced to particles of dust and scattered or spread all over the world, how is it possible to gather them together and recompose them back into our original shape and

bodies?'

The preceding verses responded that the Divine knowledge is all-encompassing and He knows every single particle of the universe, and therefore it is not difficult for Him to recollect these particles. The same subject has been further elaborated in the present verses by declaring that Allah not only has the complete knowledge of man's scattered particles, but He also has the full knowledge of all thoughts that cross the mind of man. The verse explains the reason for that: Allah is nearer to him than his jugular vein, on which is dependent his very life. Therefore, He knows man's conditions and circumstances more than man himself.

Allah is Nearer to Man than his Jugular Vein: An Analysis

The concluding part of verse [16] says: نَحْنُ اَقْرَبُ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيْدِ (We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein). The 'closeness' in the verse, by consensus of scholars, refers to "nearness in terms of all-encompassing knowledge" not in terms of physical closeness. In this manner, the verse means that Allah's power and knowledge has so encompassed man from within and without that His power and knowledge is nearer to him than his own jugular vein.

The term *warīd* [pl. *awridah*] in the Arabic language are animal veins which supply blood to the entire body. Medically, there are two types of veins: [1] the veins that emerge from the liver and supply pure blood to the entire human body. Medically, only these veins are referred to as *warīd* [*awridah*]; and [2] the veins that emerge from animal heart and supply the subtle vapor of blood to the entire human body which in medical terminology is referred to as *rūḥ* [soul]. These veins are called in Arabic *shiryān* [which actually refers to an artery]. The first type of veins is thick-walled and the second type is thin-walled.

The word *warīd* in the above verse does not necessarily apply to the vein that comes from the liver in the medical sense. In fact it could well apply, in the literal sense, to the vein that comes from the heart because in that too a type of blood circulates. As the purport of this verse is to show that Allah possesses full knowledge of all thoughts that cross the mind of man, the literal sense of the term seems more appropriate. Nevertheless, whether the word *warīd* is taken medically in the sense of a vein coming from the liver or in the sense of an artery coming from the heart is immaterial. In both cases the living creatures' life depends on it.

If the veins or arteries are cut, they lose their soul and die. In short, Allah encompasses complete and full knowledge about everything of man, because He is closer to him than his neck-vein.

According to the Honourable Ṣūfis, here the term *qurb* (closeness) goes beyond the concept of nearness in terms of knowledge. It is a special type of *ittiṣāl* [contact or bond or relationship between Allah and His creation, including man who is placed at the centre of the wonderful universe], the reality and nature of which is not known to anyone, but it does necessarily exist *bilā kaif* "without how" or indescribably. Various Qur'ānic verses and authentic Prophetic Traditions bear ample testimony to this fact. For example, the Qur'ān commands: وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ (and bow down in *sajdah*, and come closer....Al-'Alaq: 18) This is just like what the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "The closest that a servant can be to his Lord is when he is in prostration. Therefore, make abundant supplications (i.e. while prostrating) ." Another Tradition reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "When My servant performs supererogatory prayers, he attains proximity to Me." On the occasion of migration to Madīnah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه إِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَنَا "Allah is with us. (9:40)" Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام said to the children of Israel: إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي "My Lord is with me." (26:62)

This *qurb* [nearness or proximity to Allah], which man attains through nearness of obligatory and supererogatory works and through his efforts, is reserved exclusively for a believer. Such believers are called *awliyā'ullah* [the friends of Allah: they are those whom Allah has chosen as His friends]. This special bond with Allah is different from the general relationship between Allah and man, whether believer or non-believer. In brief, the above verses and narrations bear testimony to the fact that man has a special type of proximity to his Creator and Master though its reality and nature cannot be perceived. Maulānā Rūmī رحمه الله تعالى has versified this concept thus:

اتصالے بے مثال و بے قیاس..........ہست ربّ النّاس را با جانِ ناس

The Lord of the people has a special contact with the people which is beyond one's perception and has no other example.

This nearness and proximity cannot be perceived by the ordinary sensation of physical sight, but it is attained through *farāsah* of *'īmān*

[perspicacity through faith]. Tafsīr Maẓharī interprets *qurb* and *ittiṣāl* in this verse in the same sense. We have learnt earlier the interpretation of the majority of the commentators that it is not physical proximity, but rather the all-encompassing, full and complete knowledge of Allah. Apart from these two interpretations, Ibn-Kathīr interprets it in a third way. He says that the pronoun "We" does not refer to the "Being" of Allah, but to His angels who are all the time with man. They know man's soul so closely that man himself is not so well aware of it. Allah knows best!

The Two Recording Angels with every Man

إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيٰنِ (when the two receiving angels receive (every human act to record it - 50:17) In the phrase *idh yatalaqq al-mutalaqqiyāni*, (when the two receiving angels receive) the verb *yatalaqqā* is aorist from the infinitive *talaqqī* which denotes to take, to accept, to receive, to learn as in the verse فَتَلَقّٰٓى اٰدَمُ مِنْ رَّبِّهٖ كَلِمٰتٍ "Thereafter 'Ādam received a few words from his Lord (2:37)". The word *mutalaqqiyani* in the verse is the dual of *al-mutalaqqī* and refers to the two angels that accompany every human being all the time to receive and record the deeds of mankind. The phrase عَنِ الْيَمِيْنِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيْدٌ(seated [one] on the right and [one] on the left. 50:17) means that the angel sitting on the right records one's good actions, and that on the left, his bad actions. The word *qa'īd* is used in the sense of *qa'īd*, like *jalīs* in the sense of *jalīs* - both meaning "sitting". The word *qa'īd* is used for singular as well as plural. However, there is a difference in the usage of *qa'īd* and *jalīs* as opposed to *qa'īd* and *jalīs* in that the former means a person who is actually sitting. But *qa'īd* and *jalīs* are used in the general sense of the words, that is, he who accompanies someone whether sitting, standing or moving around. The word *qa'īd* is used in the verse to describe the two angels, because they accompany human beings all the time and in every state - whether sitting or standing, whether moving or sleeping. The angels move out only when the humans undress their private parts for purposes of responding to the call of nature or having sexual intercourse. However, Allah has equipped them with a special innate sensing device, so that they realize the sins, or become aware of the sins that are being committed in their absence. Ibn Kathīr states that, according to the narration of Aḥnāf Ibn Qais, the angel sitting on the right records the good deeds, and he is also the supervisor over the angel on the left. If a person commits a sin, the angel

on the right says to the one on the left, "Do not write it yet; give him a chance; may be he will repent; if he does, then let it go; otherwise record it in your record of deeds". (Ibn-Abī Ḥātim transmitted it)

Explanation of Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى

Ḥasan Baṣrī recited the above verse containing the phrase عَنِ الْيَمِيْنِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيْد (seated one on the right, and one on the left) and said:

> "O son of 'Ādam! Your record of deeds has been spread, and two honorable angels have been appointed. One on your right side and the other on your left. The one on your right side records your good deeds, and the one on your left records your evil deeds and sins. Focus on this reality, and do what you desire, increase it or decrease it. When you die, your record of deeds will be folded, and put around your neck. It will go with you in the grave, and remain there. When you will rise from your grave on the Day of Judgement, Allah will say:
>
> وَكُلَّ اِنْسَانٍ اَلْزَمْنٰهُ طٰٓئِرَهٗ فِىْ عُنُقِهٖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ كِتٰبًا يَّلْقٰهُ مَنْشُوْرًا. اِقْرَاْ كِتٰبَكَ كَفٰى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيْبًا .
>
> "And every human's (deeds determining his) fate We have tied up to his neck, and We shall bring forth for him, on the day of Resurrection, a book he will receive wide open. [13] "Read your book. This day you yourself are enough to take your own account." [14] (Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl - 13, 14).

Then Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said:

> "By God! The Supreme Being has done a great justice in that He has appointed you to take account of your own actions". (Ibn Kathīr)

Obviously the book or the ledger of deeds would not be made up of mundane paper, so that there should be any difficulty in understanding how it will go with him in the grave and remain there with him until the Day of Resurrection. It is a transcendental reality, the actual nature of which is known only to Allah. Therefore, it should not be surprising if the book is put as a garland round the neck and remains there until the Day of Resurrection.

Every Utterance of Man is Recorded

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ اِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيْبٌ عَتِيْدٌ (Not a single word is uttered by one, but there is a watcher near him, ready [to record]...50:18) In other words,

there is always a supervising angel [the scribe] whose responsibility is to record any word that the human utters or speaks. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī and Qatādah said that this angel records every single word - whether or not it is sinful or rewardable. Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said that only those utterances are recorded that are sinful or rewardable. Ibn Kathīr, having quoted both these views, preferred the first view on the basis of the general words of the verse that every utterance is recorded. According to another narration of Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah ﷺ from Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ both the views can be accommodated. This narration states that in the first instance every utterance is recorded, whether or not it is sinful or rewardable. Once a week on Thursdays, the angels review the recorded utterances and retain only those that are sinful or rewardable, good or bad; the rest are discounted. Thus the Qur'an says: يَمْحُوا اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيُثْبِتُ وَعِنْدَهٗ أُمُّ الْكِتٰبِ "Allah wipes off what He wills and affirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother Book." (Ar-Ra'd 39)

Imām Aḥmad has reported from Sayyidnā Bilāl Ibn Ḥārith Al-Muzanī ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah has said:

> "Verily, a man sometime utters a good word that pleases Allah, unaware of how highly it will be rewarded, and on its account Allah decrees His pleasure of him until the Day he meets Him. Similarly, a man might utter a word that angers Allah, unaware of how dreadful its punishment will be, and on its account Allah decrees for him His anger until the Day he meets Him."

Sayyidnā 'Alqamah ﷺ, after narrating this from Bilāl Ibn Ḥārith ﷺ, used to say: "How many words did I not utter because of this *ḥadīth*." (Ibn Kathīr)

Daze of Death

وَجَآءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ط ذٰلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيْدُ (And the daze of death has [to] come with truth. That is what you tried to escape...50:19) The phrase *sakrat-ul-maut* denotes the agony and the stupor or daze of death that a dying person experiences. Abū Bakr Ibn-ul-Anbārī رحمه الله تعالى with his own transmitting authorities reports from Masrūq that when the signs of death appeared on Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq ﷺ, Ṣiddīqah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها was called. She came and when she saw her father's condition, she spontaneously versified and recited:

اِذَا حَشْرَجَتْ يَوْمًا وَضَاقَ بِهَا الصَّدْرُ

"When the soul one day will be uneasy and the breast thereby will become narrow".

Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq ﷺ heard this and said: "You recited this verse inappropriately; why did you not recite the Qur'ānic verse [19] وَجَآءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ط ذٰلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيْدُ (And the daze of death has [to] come with truth. That is what you tried to escape...) When the Holy Prophet ﷺ faced the same state, he would put his hand in the water and wipe it over his blessed face, reciting لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ اِنَّ لِلْمَوْتِ سَكَرَات "There is no god but Allah, indeed death has its pangs or stupor."

In the prepositional phrase بِالْحَقِّ "with truth", through the preposition بِ "ba" the action of the verb is passed on to the object, meaning " the pangs of death brought forth things that are true and real which none can escape or avoid" (Maẓharī).

ذٰلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيْدُ (That is what you tried to escape...50:19) *taḥīdu* is derived from *ḥaid* which denotes to incline; to turn aside or escape from a place; to avoid or shun it; and to acknowledge. Apparently, this verse addresses the entire mankind. Every man is naturally afraid or scared of, or alarmed and terrified by, the thought of death. Life is dear to him and death is a calamity for him. As a result, he makes plans to run away from death. This is from Shar'i point of view not wrong or a sin. Death, however, is inevitable. The purport of the verse is to show that 'this is the end you were trying to escape or avert or flee from; it has come to you. Therefore, your desire will not be completely fulfilled; you will have neither a shelter nor a refuge nor a sanctuary nor an asylum from it.'

Two Angels to Lead Man to the Plane of Ḥashr

وَجَآءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّعَهَا سَآئِقٌ وَّشَهِيْدٌ (And everybody will come, along with one [angel] to drive [him to the field of reckoning] and one [angel] to testify [about his deeds] 50:21). The verse before this depicts the way the Day of Judgement will be established. This verse describes the way in which all human beings will be brought to the plane of Ḥashr. With every man there will be a *Sā'iq* and a *Shahīd*. *Sā'iq*, literally, denotes a person who remains behind a herd of animals or behind a group of people and drives them to a particular place. And *Shahīd* refers to a witness. As for *Sā'iq*, by the consensus of traditions, it refers to an angel. But there are

different views of scholars of Tafsīr regarding *Shahīd*. Some say that it too refers to an angel. In this way, there are two angels - *Sā'iq* and *Shahīd*. *Sā'iq's* duty is to drive the people to the gathering place, and *Shahīd's* task is to bear witness when the people's deeds will be presented. Another possible interpretation is that these two angels refer to the "honorable scribes" who used to accompany human beings all the time in the world on the right and left to record their deeds. A third possibility is that they refer to some other angels besides the ones mentioned here.

Some scholars interpret *Shahīd* as referring to man's action, and other scholars think that the reference is to man himself. Ibn Kathīr opines that the apparent context of the verse indicates that *Shahīd* is also an angel who will bear witness to man's actions. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān ﷺ whilst delivering a sermon recited this verse and said: "*Sā'iq* will drive every person to Allah, and *Shahīd* will testify about what one has done." Interpreters like Sayyidnā Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Zaid ﷺ placed the same interpretation on the two names. Ibn Jarīr has preferred this interpretation.

The Unseen World Becomes Visible at Death

فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ (Now We have removed your veil from you; so your sight today is sharp...50:22). There is a difference of opinion regarding the addressees of this verse. The preferred opinion is that Allah addresses mankind in general. This includes the believers, the unbelievers, the pious and the wicked. Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr and others have adopted this interpretation. The analogy drawn here is that this world is like the dream-world and the Hereafter is like the state of wakefulness. When man is in the dream-world, his eyes are closed and cannot perceive by his physical organs of sight the stark realities of the next world. When the physical organs of sight close, his dream-world ends and the state of wakefulness begins, and he is able to discern the stark realities of the Hereafter. Therefore, scholars have formulated the following aphorism:

اَلنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ فَإِذَا مَاتُوا انْتَبَهُوا

"People are sleeping in this world; when they die, they will wake up."

قَالَ قَرِينُهُ هٰذَا مَا لَدَىَّ عَتِيدٌ (And his companion will say, "This is what I have

with me, ready (to be presented as his record of deeds)... 50:23]. The word *qarīn* (translated above as 'companion) refers to the recording angel that accompanies man all the time. Earlier we have learnt that there are two angels that record deeds. In the preceding verse they were referred to as *Sā'iq* and *Shahīd*. The context indicates that, on the Day of Resurrection, the two scribes will be entrusted with two different tasks. One, named as *Sā'iq*, will drive the people to the gathering place, and the second, named as *Shahīd* will carry the records of deeds and it is this angel who, after reaching the plane of Ḥashr, will say, هٰذَا مَا لَدَيَّ عَتِيدٌ "This is what I have with me, ready (to be presented as his record of deeds)." Ibn Jarīr, in his *tafsīr*, states that the word *qarīn* comprehends both the angels *Sā'iq* and *Shahīd*.

أَلْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ (Cast, both of you [O angels,] into Jahannam every stubborn disbeliever.... 50:24]. The verb *alqiyā* is grammatically dual in number, that is, addressed to two persons. It appears that Allah will say these words to the *Sā'iq* and *Shahīd* angels; Allah will order them to throw him in the fire of Hell. Some other scholars explain it differently (Ibn Kathīr).

Man and Devil Dispute before Allah

قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْغَيْتُهُ (His (evil) companion (i.e. the Satan) will say, "O our Lord, I did not cause him to rebel,...50:27). The word *qarīn* literally denotes a companion, that is, one who accompanies or associates with another. From this point of view, *qarīn* in the preceding verse referred to the two angels that accompany human beings and record their deeds. Just as there are two angels in the company of man, there is a devil entrusted to every man, who calls him towards commission of sins, and thus leads him astray. In this verse *qarīn* refers to that devil. When it will be ordered that the person be thrown into Hell, it seems that he will say that the devil had led him astray, otherwise he would have done righteous deeds. In response, the devil will disown him and say about the human who came on the Day of Resurrection as an unbeliever that "I did not lead him astray. In fact he himself was misguided, paying no heed to the truth". In response Allah will say what follows in the next verse.

لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُم بِالْوَعِيدِ ("Do not quarrel before Me, while I had sent to you My threat well in advance.... 50:28) It means :

"I have given you sufficient proof by the words of the past Messengers, and I have sent down the Divine Books; the evidences, signs and proofs have thus been established against you; your flimsy excuses, arguments and disputes will not work today.'

مَا يُبَدَّلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ وَمَآ اَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ (The Word is not changed with Me, and I Am not a wrongdoer to My slaves." [50:29]

That is, 'I have made my decision which will certainly be implemented: it will never be changed. I will not punish anyone, except on account of their sins after the proof has been established against them. This is an absolutely fair and just decision.'

Verses 30 - 35

يَوْمَ نَقُوْلُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأْتِ وَتَقُوْلُ هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيْدٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ غَيْرَ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٣١﴾ هٰذَا مَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لِكُلِّ اَوَّابٍ حَفِيْظٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمٰنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَآءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُّنِيْبٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِدْخُلُوْهَا بِسَلٰمٍ ط ذٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُوْدِ ﴿٣٤﴾ لَهُمْ مَّا يَشَآءُوْنَ فِيْهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيْدٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

(Remind them of) the Day when We will say to *Jahannam* (hell), "Are you filled up?" and it will say, "Are there some more?" [30] **And the Jannah (Paradise) will be brought close for the God-fearing, no longer distant.** [31] **(And it will be said,)" This is what you were promised for everyone oft-returning to Allah, vigilant (against sins),** [32] **the one who fears the Raḥmān (The All-Merciful), without seeing Him, and comes up with a heart oriented towards Him.** [33] **Enter it in peace. That is the Day of Eternity." [34] For them there will be whatever they wish, and with Us there is even more.** [35]

Analysis of "Awwāb" and "Ḥafīẓ"

لِكُلِّ اَوَّابٍ حَفِيْظٍ (" This is what you were promised for everyone oft-returning to Allah, vigilant....50:32). That is to say, Paradise has been promised to every person who is *awwāb* and *ḥafīẓ*. *Awwāb* refers to the

person who turns to Allah. Here it means who turns to Him in repentance against sins. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Masūd ﷺ, Sha'bī and Mujāhid رحمهم الله تعالیٰ said that *Awwāb* refers to a person who recalls his sins in loneliness, private and secret, and seeks Allah's forgiveness. 'Ubaid Ibn 'Umair ﷺ said that *Awwāb* is one who seeks Allah's forgiveness of his sins in every sitting. And he further said that we are advised to recite the following invocation:

سُبْحَانَ اللّٰہِ وَبِحَمْدِہٖ اَللّٰھُمَّ اِنِّیْ اَسْتَغْفِرُکَ مِمَّآ اَصَبْتُ فِیْ مَجْلِسِیْ ھذا

> "Pure is Allah and praise be to Him. O Allah, I seek Your forgiveness of the evil that I might have committed in this sitting."

In a Prophetic Tradition, we are advised to recite the following supplication when dispersing. Allah will forgive all the sins that might have been committed in that session:

سُبْحَانَکَ اللّٰھُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِکَ لَآ اِلٰہَ اِلَّآ اَنْتَ اَسْتَغْفِرُکَ وَاَتُوْبُ اِلَیْکَ

> "Pure are You, O Allah, and praise be to You. There is no god but You. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in penitence."

Ḥafīẓ (حَفِیْظ), according to Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, is one who remembers his sins, so that he may return to Allah in penitence and make amends. Another report from him defines اَلْحَفِیْظُ ھُوَ الْحَافِظُ لِاَمْرِ اللّٰہِ *ḥafīẓ* as one who remembers his covenant with Allah, and does not break or betray it. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ reports from the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said: "Whoever performs four *rak'āt* of *Ishrāq* prayer early in the day is *Awwāb* and Ḥafīẓ (Qurṭubī).

In verse [33] we have the statement وَجَآءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُّنِیْبٍ (...and comes up with a heart oriented towards Him....50:33]. Abū Bakr Warrāq رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ says that the characteristics of a *munīb* is that he always maintains respect for Allah and humbles himself to Him and gives up his sensual and base desires.

Verse [35] depicts the delights of Paradise: The first part states لَھُمْ مَّا یَشَآءُوْنَ فِیْھَا (For them there will be whatever they wish,,,,, 50:35]. In other words, the righteous will have whatever delights they wish brought forthwith without any delay. It is recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'id Khudrī ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ

said: "If anyone in Paradise wishes for children, the conception, delivery of the baby and its growth will all take place in a short span of time." (Ibn Kathīr)

The second part of the verse states: وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيْدٌ (and with Us there is even more.) In other words, there are with Allah such desirable delights which have not been conceived of by any man and, therefore, they could not wish or desire for them. Sayyidnā Anas and Jābir ؓ said that "more" in this context refers to the greatest reward of enabling the people of Jannah to see Allah *bila kaif* [without "how" or in an indescribable manner]. This, according to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, is similar to His other statement in [10:26] لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنٰى وَزِيَادَةٌ "For those who have done good is the best and even more." Some reports narrate that the inmates of Paradise will see Allah on Friday [Qurṭubī].

Verses 36 - 40

وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ اَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوْا فِى الْبِلَادِ ؕ
هَلْ مِنْ مَّحِيْصٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَذِكْرٰى لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهٗ قَلْبٌ
اَوْ اَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيْدٌ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِىْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ ۖ وَّمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُّغُوْبٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى
مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوْعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوْبِ
﴿٣٩﴾ وَمِنَ الَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَاَدْبَارَ السُّجُوْدِ ﴿٤٠﴾

And how many a generations We have destroyed before them who were stronger than these in their grip on power, and they searched out the cities: Was there any place to escape? [36] **Indeed, there is a lesson in all this for him who has a heart and gives ear (to the truth) attentively.** [37] **And We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and no weariness even touched Us.** [38] **So, bear with patience what they say, and proclaim His purity along with your Lord's praise before sunrise and before sunset.** [39] **And in hours of night, do proclaim His purity, and at the ends of prostration.** [40]

Warning the Disbelievers of the imminent Torment

In the concluding sentence of verse [36] نَقَّبُوْا فِى الْبِلَادِ ۭ هَلْ مِنْ مَّحِيْصٍ (and they searched out the cities: Was there any place to escape?), the verb نَقَّبُوْا *naqqabū* is derived from the infinitive *tanqīb* which literally means to make a hole, to perforate or pierce. Idiomatically, it connotes to go or go away through the distant land or country or journey or traverse. (al-Qāmūs).

The word *maḥīṣ* means asylum or a place of refuge. In this verse Allah poses a rhetorical question to the unbelievers: How many generations We have destroyed before you! They were more numerous and mightier than you, and they traveled throughout the land for trade and business, but they could not find shelter from their destined death. No land could give them shelter.

Channels of Acquiring Knowledge

لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهٗ قَلْبٌ (who has a heart - 50:37). Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has said that here the word *qalb* [heart] means *'aql* [intellect], because the centre of intellect is heart. Some scholars of Qur'ān say that "heart" here refers to life, because the axis of life is heart. Thus the verse means only that person will be able to benefit from the advice and lesson of the Qur'ān who has life or a sound understanding with which he comprehends. The one devoid of intellect cannot benefit from the Qur'ān.

اَوْ اَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيْدٌ (and gives ear [to the truth] attentively....50:37). The phrase *Ilqā'-us- sam'* connotes to listen to someone attentively and the word *Shahīd* means present. The message of the above verses is that two types of people benefit: [1] a person who has the mind and the intellect who understands it in his mind and accepts it; and [2] a person who gives his ears and listens to the Divine verses with an attentive heart, while his heart is present and not absent. Maẓharī interprets that the first type is called *kamīlin* [thoroughly proficient members of the Islamic community]. The second type are their followers and sincere seekers of Reality who are under the direction of a spiritual guide who, on account of their sincerity and purity of heart, accept the teachings of the religion.

وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوْعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوْبِ (and proclaim His purity along with your Lord's praise before sunrise and before sunset... 50:39). The

imperative verb *sabbiḥ* is derived from the infinitive *tasbīḥ* which originally means to declare or proclaim the purity of Allah. This comprehends the verbal declaration or proclamation and the worship, such as prayer. Therefore, some scholars say that *tasbiḥ* before sunrise refers to the morning prayer, and *tasbīḥ* before sunset refers to 'Aṣr (late afternoon) prayer. Sayyidnā Jarīr Ibn 'Abdullāh reports from the Holy Prophet ﷺ [as part of a long Tradition]

اِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ اَنْ لَّا تُغْلَبُوْا عَلٰى صَلٰوةٍ قَبْلَ طُلُوْعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوْبِهَا، يَعْنِى الْعَصْرَ وَالْفَجْرَ ثُمَّ قَرَأَجَرِيْرٌ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوْعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوْبِ . (بخارى و مسلم واللفظ لمسلم)

"So if you can avoid missing the prayer before the sunrise and the prayer before sunset, that is the 'Asr prayer and the morning prayer, you must do so." (Bukhārī and Muslim - the wordings of Muslim: vide Qurṭubī)

Although according to the majority of commentators, *tasbīḥ* in the verse refers to *ṣalāh* (prayer), yet the general words of *tasbīḥ* include all those invocations also the recitation of which is encouraged by authentic *āḥadīth* at the time of morning and evening. Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"If you recite morning and evening *subḥānallāh* a hundred times,no one will bring, on the Day of Judgement, a virtuous act better than it, except those who would recite the same *tasbīḥ* in the same number or even more than that."

In the same collections, a narration by the same authority, says that whosoever recites *subḥānallāhi wa bi ḥamdihī* one hundred times in a day, his sins will be forgiven, even though they may be more than the waves of the sea. (Maẓharī)

وَاَدْبَارَ السُّجُوْدِ (...and at the ends of prostration.... 50:40) Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى interprets *sujud* in this verse to refer to the five obligatory prayers, and the phrase "at the ends of the prostrations", according to him, refers to all those *tasbiḥāt* which authentic *āḥadīth* encourage us to recite after every prayer. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Whosoever recites after every obligatory prayer 33 times *subḥānallāh* (سبحان الله), 33 times *al-ḥamdulillāh* (الحمد لله) and 33 times

allāhu 'akbar (الله اكبر), and once:

لا اله الّا اللّٰه وحده' لاشريک له' له الملک وله الحمد وهو علیٰ کلّ شئ قدير

lā ilāha illallāhu waḥdahū lā-sharīka lahū lah-ul-mulku wa-lah-ul- ḥamdu wa huwa 'alā kulli shai'in qadīr.

- all his sins will be forgiven, even though they may be equal to the waves of the sea (Bukhārī and Muslim). The phrase "at the ends of the prostrations" could also refer to the supererogatory prayers to be performed after the obligatory prayers as authentic Traditions testify (Maẓharī).

Verses 41 - 45

وَاسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيْبٍ ﴿٤١﴾ يَّوْمَ يَسْمَعُوْنَ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ ۭ ذٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوْجِ ﴿٤٢﴾ اِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيٖ وَنُمِيْتُ وَ اِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٤٣﴾ يَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ الْاَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ۭ ذٰلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيْرٌ ﴿٤٤﴾ نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَمَآ اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ ۣ فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْاٰنِ مَنْ يَّخَافُ وَعِيْدِ ﴿٤٥﴾

And listen: The Day when the caller will call out from a near place, [41] the Day they will hear the Cry in reality–that will be the Day of Resurrection. [42] Surely We alone give life and bring death, and to Us is the final return [43] on the Day when the earth will burst apart exposing them, while they will be hurrying up (to come out). That is a mustering, so easy for Us. [44] We know well what they say, and you are not one to compel them. So give advice, through the Qur'ān, to the one who fears My warning. [45]

يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيْبٍ (...the Day when the caller will call from a near place - 50:41). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Asākir ﷺ reports from Zaid Ibn Jābir Shafi'ī that the "caller" referred to here is the angel Isrāfīl ﷺ who will stand on the Dome of the Rock (*Ṣakhrah*) and will address all the dead people of the entire world : "O you rotten bones! O you decomposed skins! O you scattered hair! Listen, Allah commands you to reassemble to render account of your actions (Maẓharī)." This scene depicts how, after the second blowing of the trumpet, the world will be resurrected. The phrase "a near place" refers to the fact that the voice of the angel will reach everybody

who rises from death anywhere on the surface of the earth, and will feel as though the angel had called him from a nearby place. 'Ikrimah ﷺ says that the voice will be heard in such a way as if someone is speaking to us in our ears. Other scholars have said that "a near place" refers to the Dome of the Rock, because that is the centre of the earth, and is equidistant, being separated by equal distances from all sides of the globe. (Qurṭubī)

يَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا (...on the Day when the earth will burst apart exposing them, while they will be hurrying up. - 50:44). The Prophetic Tradition indicates that this 'hurrying up' will be towards Syria where the Dome of the Rock is situated. Isrāfīl عليه السلام will stand on it, and call the people on the Day of Judgement. It is recorded in Jāmi' Tirmidhī, on the authority of Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah Ibn Ḥayadah ﷺ, that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, pointing towards Syria, said:

مِنْ هٰهُنَا إِلٰى هٰهُنَا تُحْشَرُوْنَ رُكْبَانًا وَّمُشَاةً وَّتُجَرُّوْنَ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ

> "From here towards that [pointing towards Syria] you will be raised, some riding, and others on foot, and yet others will be dragged on the faces on the Day of Judgement..."

فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْاٰنِ مَنْ يَّخَافُ وَعِيْدِ (So give advice, through the Qur'ān, to the one who fears My warning... 50:45). This means that the message of the Qur'ān is to be conveyed to the entire mankind, to all and sundry. However, only those who fear Allah and dread His torment will remember and heed. Qatādah ﷺ used to recite this verse and supplicate in the following words:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا مِمَّنْ يَّخَافُ وَعِيْدَكَ وَيَرْجُوْا مَوْعُوْدَكَ يَا بَارُّ يَا رَحِيْمُ

> "O Allah! Make us among those who fear Your threat, and hope for Your promise, O the One who fulfills His promise, O Raḥīm [the Most Merciful]."

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Qāf
Ends here

Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt

(The Scatterers)

This Sūrah was revealed in Makkah. It contains 60 verses and 3 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 23

وَالذّٰرِيٰتِ ذَرْوًا ﴿١﴾ فَالْحٰمِلٰتِ وِقْرًا ﴿٢﴾ فَالْجٰرِيٰتِ يُسْرًا ﴿٣﴾
فَالْمُقَسِّمٰتِ اَمْرًا ﴿٤﴾ اِنَّمَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لَصَادِقٌ ﴿٥﴾ وَّاِنَّ الدِّيْنَ لَوَاقِعٌ
﴿٦﴾ وَالسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّكُمْ لَفِيْ قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ ﴿٨﴾
يُّؤْفَكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ اُفِكَ ﴿٩﴾ قُتِلَ الْخَرّٰصُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِيْ غَمْرَةٍ
سَاهُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ يَسْئَلُوْنَ اَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الدِّيْنِ ﴿١٢﴾ يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ
يُفْتَنُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ ذُوْقُوْا فِتْنَتَكُمْ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾
اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿١٥﴾ اٰخِذِيْنَ مَآ اٰتٰىهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ اِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوْا قَبْلَ ذٰلِكَ مُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ كَانُوْا قَلِيْلًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُوْنَ
﴿١٧﴾ وَبِالْاَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَفِيْ اَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّآئِلِ
وَالْمَحْرُوْمِ ﴿١٩﴾ وَفِي الْاَرْضِ اٰيٰتٌ لِّلْمُوْقِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَفِيْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ
اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَفِي السَّمَآءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَوَرَبِّ
السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِنَّهٗ لَحَقٌّ مِّثْلَ مَآ اَنَّكُمْ تَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾

(I swear) by those (winds) that scatter dust, [1] then by those (clouds) that bear loads, [2] then by those (boats) that sail with ease, [3] then by those (angels) who distribute things, [4] whatever you are being promised is surely true, [5] and Recompensing (of deeds) is sure to happen. [6] By the sky, having paths, [7] you are (involved) in a contradictory statement. [8] Turned away from this (Qur'ān) is the one who is turned away (totally from the Truth.) [9] Death upon those who make conjectures (against the true faith), [10] those who are drowned in ignorance, forgetful! [11] They ask, "When shall be the Day of Recompense?" [12] (It will be) the Day when they will be heated on the Fire, [13] (and it will be said to them,) "Taste (the punishment of) your mischief. This is what you have been asking to be brought sooner." [14] The God-fearing (on the other hand) will be in gardens and springs, [15] receiving what their Lord will have given to them. Indeed, prior to this, they were good in their deeds. [16] They used to sleep little in the night, [17] and in the hours before dawn, they used to pray for forgiveness, [18] and in their wealth, there was a right for the one who asks and the one who is deprived. [19]

And in the earth, there are signs for those who (seek truth to) believe, [20] and in your own selves! So, do you not perceive? [21] And in the heavens, there is your sustenance and all that you have been promised. [22] So, by the Lord of the heavens and the earth, it (the Day of Recompense) is a reality, as sure as that you speak. [23]

Affirmation of After-Life

The subject-matter of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, like its predecessor Sūrah Qāf, is mainly the Hereafter, Resurrection, Reckoning, Judgement, and Allah's reward and punishment. The first few verses contain an oath from Allah that the promise of Resurrection is true, and shall come to pass. In these verses Allah swears an oath by four phenomena, as follows:

وَالذّٰرِيٰتِ ذَرْوًا . فَالْحٰمِلٰتِ وِقْرًا. فَالْجٰرِيٰتِ يُسْرًا. فَالْمُقَسِّمٰتِ اَمْرًا .

(I swear) by those (winds) that scatter dust, then by those (clouds) that bear loads, then by those (boats) that sail with ease, then by those (angels) who distribute things, (51:1-4)

There is a Ḥadīth whose attribution to the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been held by Ibn Kathīr as *ḍaʿīf* [weak], but it is also reported as a saying of

Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ and 'Alī ﷺ. It explains these four things as follows: The expression Dhāriyāt [scatterers] refers to the wind that blows up dust; the expression *ḥāmilāt-i-wiqran* literally denotes burden-bearers and contextually refers to the clouds that carry the burden of water or rain; the expression *jāriyāt-i-yusran* refers to the ships that sail smoothly and with ease in the water; and the expression *muqassimāt-i-amran* refers to the angels who distribute to all creatures their sustenance and water, and different kinds of difficulties and comfort as determined by Allah's orders and decrees (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī and Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr quote these narrations both as *marfū'* and *mawqūf*).

وَالسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ، إِنَّكُمْ لَفِىْ قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ (By the sky, having paths, you are (involved) in a contradictory statement - 51:7-8) *Ḥubuk* is the plural *ḥabīkah* and primarily denotes thin irregular lines or streaks on fabrics when woven. They resemble tracks and pathways; therefore pathways are also referred to as *ḥubuk* in Arabic. Most interpreters take this to be the meaning in this context. Some scholars say that the 'tracks' refer to pathways used by the angels for entrance and exit. Others say that the tracks or paths of heaven are those orbits of planets and stars that are visible in the sky.

As the streaks of the woven fabric is its beauty, some scholars tend to interpret the verse as 'By the heaven full of beauty, grace, magnificence and perfection'.

Differing Beliefs of the Pagans

إِنَّكُمْ لَفِىْ قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ (you are [involved] in a contradictory statement... 51:8) Verse [7] was an oath and this verse is the statement for which oath is sworn. Apparently, the verse addresses the pagans of Makkah who assigned contradictory attributes to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, calling him at different times a madman, a sorcerer, a poet and other discordant names. According to another possible interpretation, the verse addresses the entire humankind - Muslims as well as non-believers. Thus 'contradictory statement' would mean that a sector believed in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and accepted him; and another sector rejected him and opposed him (Maẓharī).

يُؤْفَكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أُفِكَ (Turned away from this (Qur'ān) is the one who is turned away.....51:9). The word *'ufik* literally denotes to turn away. The pronoun in *'anhu* has two possibilities: [1] it could be referring to Qur'ān and Rasūl. In this case, the verse would mean that only that person turns

away from the Qur'ān who has been destined to be deprived of their guidance. And [2] the pronoun could be referring to the 'contradictory statement' in which case the meaning would be: he who turns away from the truth because of your discordant thoughts, is the one deprived of truth.

قُتِلَ الْخَرّٰصُوْنَ (Death upon those who make conjectures - 51:10). The expression *kharrāṣūn* is the plural of *kharrāṣ* which means one who estimates or say things by conjecture. In this context the word refers to those stubborn and obstinate infidels who, without any reason or evidence, say discordant things about the Messenger ﷺ. Thus it would not be out of turn to interpret *kharrāṣūn* as *kadhdhābūn*, meaning 'the great liars' as they are condemned, denounced, cursed and imprecated (Maẓharī) in this statement. After the mention of infidels, several verses that follow describe the qualities of the righteous people and the pleasant consequences of their righteousness.

Remaining Awake at Night for Voluntary Prayers

كَانُوْا قَلِيْلًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُوْنَ (They used to sleep little in the night,... 51:17). The imperfect verb *yahja'ūn* is derived from the infinitive *hujū'* which means to sleep at night. The verse describes the quality of the righteous believers is that they spend their nights in voluntary worship of Allah. They sleep little at night and remain awake during the greater part of it. Ibn Jarīr preferred this interpretation. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said: "The righteous perform voluntary night prayers, and do not sleep during the night except a little." Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah ؓ, Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى and other leading scholars of Tafsīr have taken the particle *mā* in the sense of negation, that is, grammatically they treat it as *mā nāfiyah* or negative particle, meaning they spend a little part of every night awake,and not sleeping. They would worship Allah and perform voluntary prayers every night, even during a small part of the night. From this point of view, it includes all those people who pray to Allah during any part of the night - whether in the beginning, or in the middle, or at the end of it. Therefore, Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ؓ and 'Abul-'Āliyah said: "They used to pray between Maghrib and 'Ishā'." Imām Abū Ja'far Baqir said that this includes those people who do not sleep before 'Ishā' prayer (Ibn Kathīr).

Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports from Aḥnaf Ibn Qais who used to say: "When I compared my deeds with those of the inmates of Paradise, I

found that they are a people who occupy a very high, lofty and elevated status; and they are a people whose deeds are incomparable and our deeds cannot match theirs, because they sleep little at nights and worship much. When I compared my deeds with those of the inmates of Hell , I found that they give the lie to Allah and His Holy Prophet ﷺ and are sceptical about the Hereafter [from which Allah has protected us]. Therefore, in comparison, our deeds match neither with those of the real inmates of Paradise, nor [praise be to Allah] with those of the inmates of Hell. Thus we learn that from the viewpoint of action, our position is what the Qur'ān describes: خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّاٰخَرَ سَيِّئًا '...(They had mixed a good deed with another that was evil. - 9:102) Thus the best person amongst us is the one who would at least remain within the boundaries of this class of people."

'Abd-ur-raḥmān Ibn Zaid Ibn Aslam رحمه الله says that a member of the tribe Banū Tamīm said to my father: "O Abū 'Usāmah, we do not find that quality in us which Allah mentions in describing the righteous, that is, كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُوْنَ "They used to sleep little in the night," because our position is quite the contrary: قَلِيلًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ مَا نَقُوْمُ 'We are very little awake at night to worship Allah'. My father replied:

طوبى لمن رَقد اذا نعس واتقى الله اذا اسْتَيْقَظَ

'Good tidings for him who sleeps away when he feels sleepy and exercises righteousness when he is awake, that is, does not do any work that is contrary to Shari'ah.'"

In other words, acceptance in the sight of Allah is not necessarily restricted to protracted waking hours at night for worship. If a person is impelled to sleep, and does not remain awake for long, but abstains from any sinful activities when awake, he is also worthy of felicitation.

'Abdullāh Ibn Salām رضي الله عنه reports from the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said:

يَاَ يُّهَا النَّاسُ اَطْعِمُوا الطَّعَامَ وَصِلُوا الْاَرْحَامَ وَافْشُوا السَّلَامَ وَصَلُّوْا بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ . (ابن كثير)

"O people, feed people, do good to kith and kin, greet each otherwith *salām*, pray at night while people are asleep, and you will enter Paradise in peace." (Ibn Kathīr)

Merits of Seeking Forgiveness in the hours before dawn

وَبِالْاَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ (and in the hours before dawn, they used to pray for

forgiveness..., 51:18) The word *asḥār* is the plural of *saḥar,* and it refers to the latter sixth part of the night. This verse speaks of the significance of seeking forgiveness in the latter part of the night. Another verse [3:17] also speaks of the significance of seeking forgiveness at the last hours of the night thus: وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِيْنَ بِالْاَسْحَارِ (...and who seek forgiveness in pre-dawn hours. - 3:17) It is confirmed in the Ṣaḥīḥ collections as well as others, from several Companions, that the Messenger of Allah said:

> "Allah, the Most High, descends each night to the lowest heaven when the last third of the night remains. He says: 'Is there anyone who is repenting, so that I may accept his repentance? Is there anyone seeking forgiveness, so that I may forgive him? Is there anyone asking of Me, so that I may grant him his request?'

Here it may be noted that in this verse Allah is describing the pre-dawn prayer of forgiveness of those righteous ones who, according to the preceding verse, are preoccupied for the major part of the night with the worship of Allah and sleep very little. Thus there seems to be no link between their previous description and their description of asking for forgiveness in this verse, because forgiveness is sought when there are sins. People who spent the entire night in worshipping Allah - what does it mean to seek forgiveness of sins? The answer to this question is that these people have the true appreciation of Allah's majesty, dignity and splendour, and they realise that there are shortcomings in their night-long worship. Therefore they seek Allah's forgiveness for failing to perform His worship as due. (Maẓharī)

Special Guidance for Philanthropists

وَفِىْٓ اَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّآئِلِ وَالْمَحْرُوْمِ (and in their wealth, there was a right for the one who asks and the one who is deprived...51:19) The word *sā'il* means the poor or needy who begs others, that is, he expresses his needs to people who help him. The word *maḥrūm* also refers to a poor or needy, but who cannot express his needs from a sense of self-respect or a feeling of shame, and thus is deprived of people's help. In this verse another quality of the believers and the righteous is mentioned, that is, their quality of spending in charity in Allah's way. When spending, they do not only give to those who ask for help, but they also make it their responsibility to find out who are needy ones and do not disclose their needs to others.

The purpose of the verse is to show that the believers and the righteous do not only perform bodily worship, such as prayers and remaining awake at night, but they also play a major role in performing pecuniary worship, in that besides helping the people who beg they also look for, and help, those who out of self-respect do not express their needs to anyone. When mentioning this pecuniary worship, the expression used by the Qur'ān is the following, وَفِىٓ أَمْوَٰلِهِمْ حَقٌّ "and in their wealth, there was a right". It means that when they meet the needs of the poor, they do not deem it a favour shown to them, but they appreciate that the poor have a 'right' in the wealth Allah has blessed them with, and fulfilling one's right is not a favour; it is rather a duty and responsibility that one has to discharge.

Allah's Signs on the Earth and in Mankind

وَفِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ءَايَٰتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ (And in the earth, there are signs for those who [seek truth to] believe,... 51:20). In the preceding verses in the first instance a description of the infidels and rejecters and their evil fate was given. As against those who flounder in the welter of wrong beliefs and evil deeds and deny the possibility of the Day of Judgement, the qualities of the believers and the righteous were subsequently given, and their elevated position was described. Now once again attention is drawn to those who deny the possibility of Judgement Day. They are invited to ponder on the signs of Allah on earth that testify to the might of the Creator and His boundless power, and thus the skeptics are advised to desist from denying the Judgement Day. In this way the statement is connected to the preceding statement in verse [8] "You are involved in contradictory statement."

Tafsīr Mazharī is of the view that this verse too describes the quality of the believers and the righteous. The word *mūqinīn* (those who have certainty of faith) refers to the same God-fearing people mentioned in an earlier verse. The sense is that these people keep pondering on the divine signs spread on earth and in their own beings, and it increases their belief. In another verse they are described as وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِى خَلْقِ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ "...and ponder on the creation of the heavens and the earth...". (3:191)

Allah's signs on earth include what Allah has placed on the earth, the various plants, animals, valleys, mountains, deserts, rivers and oceans. He also created mankind with different languages, colours, intentions and abilities, and a variety among them, differences in the power of

understanding and comprehension, their deeds, and ultimately earning happiness or misery. Allah put every organ in their bodies in its rightful place where they most need it to be. Thus Allah says: وَفِىٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ ۚ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ (... and in your own selves! So, do you not perceive? ....51:21). Out of the innumerous signs of Allah's power which are present everywhere in the universe, including the heavenly and celestial beings and creatures, only those signs are referred to here which are available on earth, because they are very close to man's experience, and he resides and moves about among them. The present verse now speaks of man himself. Man is required to ponder on his own body, its limbs and organs. Every single part of the body testifies to the boundless Wisdom of Allah, and it will make him realize that his small being represents and encompasses almost all the divine signs that are scattered in the vast universe. That is why man is termed as 'the universe in miniature', because all types of creation are present in his existence. If a man thinks of all phases he has passed through right from his birth till his death, he may perceive the power of Allah Ta'ālā as if he discerns Him clearly.

The Development of the Sperm and Embryo in the Womb

Human microscopic sperm and egg is an amazing phenomenon. It is made up of foodstuff and tenuous particles from various parts of the world. If the sperm establishes itself in the mother's womb, then more material is added to it, and it changes into a red clot. It then changes and becomes a shapeless lump of flesh, like a piece of meat with no form or shape. Then out of this shapeless lump bones are fashioned; then the bones are clothed with flesh; and it starts to take on a form and shape, developing a head, arms, chest, stomach, thighs, legs, feet and all its members. A wonderful brain is placed under its skull in whose complicated layers lie all mental abilities. Thus equipping it, Allah sends an angel to it who breathes the soul into it. After the completion of its creation, it is brought into this world where he develops from infancy to full adulthood to old age. Then he gradually progresses from zero level of knowledge and consciousness to an intelligent, rational and active being. The human forms and shapes are so different that no two faces are identical in millions and billions of people even in a small area. Furthermore, there are differences in their temperaments, dispositions and habits. There is unity in this diversity. All this is the marvel of the perfect power of Allah who has neither partners nor rivals: فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ "So blessed is Allah, the Best Creator!"(23:14)

Man experiences all this not from outside himself, but within himself, day and night. Only a person who is absolutely blind and senseless will ever deny the existence of Allah. Therefore, at the conclusion of the verse, the Qur'ān poses the rhetorical question: أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ "So, do you not perceive?" (21) A person need not be very intelligent to understand the facts of life. If his sight is intact, he can arrive at the right conclusion.

وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ (And in the heavens, there is your sustenance and all that you have been promised.... 51:22). The plain and simple interpretation of this is that 'in heaven' here means what has been written in the Preserved Tablet *(Al-Lauḥ-ul-Maḥfūẓ)*. It is clear that man's sustenance, what has been promised to him and whatever its consequences will be - are all preserved in the Preserved Tablet. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudrī ﷺ reports that the Holy Messenger ﷺ said: "Even if someone tries to avoid and run away from his designated sustenance, he will not succeed, because his sustenance will pursue him just as he cannot run away from his death". (Qurṭubī) Some scholars say that 'sustenance' here signifies "rain". In this case 'heaven' will not refer to the body, arch or vault of the sky. It refers to anything that hangs overhead and covers things in its shade, including the celestial atmosphere and clouds from where the rain falls. The expression 'all that you have been promised' refers to Paradise and its delights. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنَّكُمْ تَنطِقُونَ (...it [the Day of Recompense] is a reality, as sure as that you speak....51:23). It means that all of the matters relating to Judgement, Resurrection and Recompense that they have been promised shall certainly occur. Therefore, it is the truth, there being no doubt about it, so they should not doubt its coming, just as they do not doubt that they can speak. There are five physical sensations of perception: sight, hearing, tasting, feeling and smelling. Here 'speaking' has been singled out probably because the faculty of speech is the only one where there can be no trace of deception or illusion, whereas the other sensations, on account of ailments, can get contorted. Differences in hearing and seeing are known. In sickness the sensation of tasting gets reversed or distorted in some other way. Sometimes sweet things taste bitter and bitter things taste sweet. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 24 - 46

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ

فَقَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ؕ قَالَ سَلٰمٌ ۚ قَوْمٌ مُّنْكَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَرَاغَ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهٖ فَجَآءَ
بِعِجْلٍ سَمِيْنٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَقَرَّبَهٗٓ اِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ اَلَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَاَوْجَسَ
مِنْهُمْ خِيْفَةً ؕ قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ ؕ وَبَشَّرُوْهُ بِغُلٰمٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَاَقْبَلَتِ
امْرَاَتُهٗ فِيْ صَرَّةٍ فَصَكَّتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوْزٌ عَقِيْمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالُوْا
كَذٰلِكِ ۙ قَالَ رَبُّكِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ
اَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّآ اُرْسِلْنَآ اِلٰى قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾
لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّنْ طِيْنٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ مُّسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
لِلْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَاَخْرَجْنَا مَنْ كَانَ فِيْهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَمَا
وَجَدْنَا فِيْهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِّنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا فِيْهَآ اٰيَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ
يَخَافُوْنَ الْعَذَابَ الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَفِيْ مُوْسٰٓى اِذْ اَرْسَلْنٰهُ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ
بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَتَوَلّٰى بِرُكْنِهٖ وَقَالَ سٰحِرٌ اَوْ مَجْنُوْنٌ ﴿٣٩﴾
فَاَخَذْنٰهُ وَجُنُوْدَهٗ فَنَبَذْنٰهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَهُوَ مُلِيْمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَفِيْ عَادٍ اِذْ
اَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيْحَ الْعَقِيْمَ ﴿٤١﴾ مَا تَذَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ اَتَتْ عَلَيْهِ اِلَّا
جَعَلَتْهُ كَالرَّمِيْمِ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَفِيْ ثَمُوْدَ اِذْ قِيْلَ لَهُمْ تَمَتَّعُوْا حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ
﴿٤٣﴾ فَعَتَوْا عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصّٰعِقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾
فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوْا مِنْ قِيَامٍ وَّمَا كَانُوْا مُنْتَصِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَقَوْمَ نُوْحٍ مِّنْ
قَبْلُ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا فٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾

Has there come to you the story of the honoured guests of Ibrāhīm? [24] **When they entered unto him and said, "We greet you with *salām*." He said, "*salām* on you." (And he said to himself,) "(They are) unknown people."** [25] **Then he slipped off to his home, and fetched a fattened calf.** [26] **So he brought it close to them (to eat, but being angels, they refrained.) He said, "Would you not eat?"** [27] **So he felt some fear in his heart. They said, "Be**

not scared." And they gave him the good news of (the birth of) a knowledgeable boy. [28] **So his wife came forward with a clamour and slapped her own face and said, "(How can I have a child when I am) a barren old woman?"** [29] **They said, "This is how your Lord has said. Surely, He is All-Wise, All-Knowing."** [30] **He (Ibrāhīm) said (to the angels), "Then, what is your mission O messengers?"** [31] **They said, "We are sent to a guilty people,** [32] **so that we may send down upon them stones of clay,** [33] **marked, with your Lord, for the transgressors."** [34] **So, We let the believers who were there to come out (from danger),** [35] **but We did not find in it any Muslims, except one house.** [36] **And We left in this (event) a sign (of deterrence) for those who fear the painful punishment.** [37] **And (We left a similar sign) in (the story of) Mūsā, when We sent him to Fir'aun (the Pharoah) with a clear proof.** [38] **So he turned away along with his chiefs and said, " (Mūsā is) a magician or a madman!"** [39] **So We seized him and his army, and cast them into the sea, as he was the one who came up with culpable behaviour.** [40] **And (a similar sign was left) in (the story of) 'Ād, when We sent upon them the wind that was barren (from any benefit);** [41] **it spared nothing it came upon, but rendered it like a stuff smashed by decay.** [42] **And (a similar sign was left) in (the story of) Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a while."** [43] **Then they rebelled against the command of your Lord; so the thunderbolt (of divine punishment) seized them, while they were looking on.** [44] **Then they were neither able to stand upright, nor could they defend themselves.** [45] **And (We have destroyed) the people of Nūḥ before; indeed they were a sinful people.** [46]

Comforting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

فَقَالُوا سَلٰمًا ط قَالَ سَلٰمٌ ("We greet you with *salām.*" He said, "Salām on you." 51:25). The angels greeted him with *salāman* in the accusative case, whereas Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام responded to the greeting in the nominative case thus: *salāmun.* The nominative case in Arabic is a nominal sentence which carries the sense of greater strength, continuity and persistence. The Qur'ānic injunction is that 'when you are greeted with a salutation, greet one better than it...', so Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm

عليه السلام, the Friend of Allah chose a better reply, implementing Allah's command: reciprocating the greeting with the term *salāmun* is stronger than the greeting using the term *salāman*.

قَوْمٌ مُّنكَرُوْنَ ("[They are] unknown people."... 51:25). The word *munkar*, the letter [m] carrying *ḍammah* and the letter [k] carrying *fatḥ* means "unknown". As sin or sinful work is unknown in Islām, it is also referred to as *munkar*. The angels came to Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام in the image of handsome young wonderfully graceful men; therefore he could not recognize them. He thought to himself that these are strangers and said to himself 'They are unknown to me'. Or it is possible that he might have mentioned this to the guests in the form of a question and the purpose might have been to find out who they were.

رَاغَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ (Then he slipped off to his home - 51:26). *Rāgha* is derived from *rawgh* which means to slip out quietly. In other words, Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام discreetly went in the house in haste to arrange for meal for his guests, so that they do not sense it. Otherwise they would have stopped him.

Rules of Entertaining Guests

Ibn Kathīr says that this verse indicates proper manners for entertaining guests: Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, the host, did not first mention that he would make food for them. He slipped out quietly, and brought the food to his guests quickly, while they were unaware that it was being prepared for them. Rather, he discreetly had it prepared and placed before them. He prepared the best kind of food he had, a young, fat roasted calf. Moreover, he did not place the food far from them and invite them to come close to it to eat. Rather, he placed it close to them 'فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِم 'brought it close to them' and refrained from ordering them to eat. Instead he invited them politely, kindly and cordially to partake thus أَلَا تَأْكُلُوْنَ 'Would you not eat?' This statement in the form of a question is similar to one of us saying to a guest, 'Would you kindly partake of it - even if you are not hungry, at least for my sake?'

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً (So he felt some fear in his heart...51:28). When the guests did not eat the food, the Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام conceived fear of them. In those days it was the custom of the noble people to entertain the guests who were expected to accept the hospitality of the host. If they

did not, the host would become apprehensive that there is some danger afoot - probably they are enemies who came to cause some kind of trouble for them. In those days, even the rogues and wrongdoers had the noble quality that they would not cause any harm to anyone whose food they had eaten. Hence refusing to eat was a sign of hostility or danger.

فَاَقْبَلَتِ امْرَاَتُه‘ فِىْ صَرَّةٍ (So his wife came forward with a clamour,...51:29). The word *ṣarrah* means vociferation or clamour or most vehement clamour of crying. *Ṣarīr* is the sound of a pen when it is writing. When Sayyidah Sārah رضى الله عنها heard that the angels were giving good news to her husband Ibrāhīm عليه السلام of the birth of a son, she thought that this news was as good to her as it was to her husband, for the son would be theirs, and therefore, they both were getting some good news. As a result, she involuntarily screamed loudly, she struck herself upon her forehead as women do when confronted with an amazing thing and said: and slapped her own face and said, عَجُوْزٌ عَقِيْمٌ "A barren old woman?" meaning 'How can I give birth while I am an old woman? And even when I was young I was barren and could not have children.' The angels replied that Allah has power over all things and therefore this would happen even so: "This is how your Lord has said." Thus when Holy Prophet Isḥāq عليه السلام was born, Sayyidah Sārah رضى الله عنها was ninety-nine years old and Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was one hundred years old. (Qurṭubī)

When, in the course of the conversation, Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام discovered that the guests were angels, he asked them what was their mission and they replied that they had been sent to the people of Lūṭ عليه السلام to destroy them as a punishment for their unspeakable crime. They would be stoned to death, but not with large stones. Small pebbles of baked clay would be sent down upon them: مُسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ "marked, with your Lord, for the transgressors."... 51:34), that is, pebbles conspicuously marked by Allah. Some scholars say that each stone bore the name of the person with which he was to be destroyed, and if he ran in any particular direction, he was pursued by the same stone. Other verses say that these people were destroyed by Jibra'īl's عليه السلام turning their territory upside down. The two descriptions of the punishment are not mutually contradictory: Probably, the stoning incident took place first, and then the earth was turned upside down.

After the mention of the people of Lūṭ عليه السلام, the people of Mūsā عليه السلام,

Fir'aun and others are taken up briefly. When Mūsā عليه السلام delivered the message of truth to Fir'aun, the latter reacted thus: فَتَوَلّٰی بِرُكْنِهٖ (So he turned away along with his chiefs,...51:39) The original word used for 'his chiefs' is *rukn* which means power. Here it is used to refer to his army and chiefs of his government. In the story of Lūṭ عليه السلام he has been mentioned saying, اَوْ اٰوِیْٓ اِلٰی رُكْنٍ شَدِیْدٍ (or that I had the backing of a strong group' The word *rukn* is used there in the same sense. (See Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 4/p. 658, 661: '...or that I had the backing of some strong group...')

After this, the stories of the people of 'Ād, Thamūd and Nūḥ عليه السلام are told. These stories were narrated many times before.

Verses 47 - 55

وَالسَّمَآءَ بَنَيْنٰهَا بِاَيْدٍ وَّاِنَّا لَمُوْسِعُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَالْاَرْضَ فَرَشْنٰهَا فَنِعْمَ
الْمٰهِدُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَیْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَیْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ
﴿٤٩﴾ فَفِرُّوْٓا اِلَی اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنِّیْ لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِیْرٌ مُّبِیْنٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوْا
مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ ؕ اِنِّیْ لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِیْرٌ مُّبِیْنٌ ﴿٥١﴾ كَذٰلِكَ مَآ اَتَی
الَّذِیْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا قَالُوْا سَاحِرٌ اَوْ مَجْنُوْنٌ ﴿٥٢﴾
اَتَوَاصَوْا بِهٖ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَآ اَنْتَ بِمَلُوْمٍ
﴿٥٤﴾ وَّذَكِّرْ فَاِنَّ الذِّكْرٰی تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾

And the sky was built by Us with might, and indeed, We are the One who expands. [47] **And the earth was spread by Us as a floor; so excellent Spreader are We.** [48] **And from every thing We have created (a pair of) two kinds, so that you may receive advice.** [49] **So flee to Allah. Indeed I am a plain warner sent by Him for you.** [50] **And do not make up any other god along with Allah. Indeed I am a plain warner sent by Him for you.** [51] **In similar way, no messenger came to those before them, but they said, "(He is) a magician or a madman."** [52] **Have they handed down (this saying) to each other as a legacy? No, but they are a rebellious people.** [53] **So, turn away from them, for you are not blamed.** [54] **And**

keep reminding, because reminding benefits the believers. [55]

Proofs of Allah's Oneness abound in the Creation of the Heavens and Earth

The preceding verses mentioned the reality of the Hereafter and the Judgement Day, and the punishment of those who denied the reality. The present set of verses reaffirm the perfect power of Allah, reminding us about the reality of the Day of Resurrection and allaying the doubt and suspicion of those who deny the reality. It proves the oneness of Allah and reiterates emphatically to believe in the Messenger ﷺ.

بَنَيْنٰهَا بِاَيْدٍ وَّاِنَّا لَمُوْسِعُوْنَ (And the sky was built by Us with might, and indeed, We are the One who expands.... 51:47). The word *aidin*, according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, means strength or power in this context.

فَفِرُّوْا اِلَى اللّٰهِ (So flee to Allah....51:50). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said: "It means: Flee from your sins and take shelter in Allah for repentance." Abū Bakr Warrāq and Junaid Baghdādī رحمهما الله تعالى said that the base self of man and the devil invite him to commit sins, and they deceive him. He needs to take refuge in Allah who will protect him against their evil. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 56 - 60

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿٥٦﴾ مَآ اُرِيْدُ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ رِّزْقٍ
وَّمَآ اُرِيْدُ اَنْ يُّطْعِمُوْنِ ﴿٥٧﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَالرَّزَّاقُ ذُوالْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِيْنُ ﴿٥٨﴾
فَاِنَّ لِلَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ذَنُوْبًا مِّثْلَ ذَنُوْبِ اَصْحٰبِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُوْنِ ﴿٥٩﴾
فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ يَّوْمِهِمُ الَّذِىْ يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾

And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me. [56] **I do not want any sustenance from them, nor do I want them to feed Me.** [57] **In fact, Allah is the All-Sustainer, Possessor of power, the Strong.** [58] **So, those who did wrong deserve a share (in the punishment) like the share of their companions. So, they should not ask Me to hasten on.** [59] **Woe, then, to those who disbelieve because of the Day of**

theirs that they are promised (for punishment). [60]

The Purpose of Jinn's and Mankind's creation

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me."...51:56). This apparently may raise two questions: [1] If Allah has created a creature for a particular task, and it is His will that it should perform that task, rationally it is impossible for it to deviate from that task, because doing anything contrary to the will of Allah is inconceivable. [2] The purpose of *jinn's* and man's creation has been restricted to the worship of Allah whereas there are many other underlying reasons and benefits in their creation.

Scholars have made different approaches to solve these problems. Some say that this verse pertains to the believers only, that is, only believing *jinn* and believing mankind are created for worship and for no other task. It is obvious that the believers are more or less steadfast to worship. This is the view of Ḍaḥḥāk, Sufyān Thawrī and others. According to one version of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, the word *mu'minīn* does occur in the verse thus: وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ 'And I have not created the believing *jinn* and mankind except that they should worship Me'. This version supports the view that the verse is only in connection with the believers.

Another answer to the question, given by Moulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى, is that: Allah has commanded all to worship, but at the same time He has equipped them with free will. Some of them exercised their God-given free will correctly and chose to worship Him, but others used their God-given free will incorrectly and deviated from worshipping Him. This is what Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ has said, as quoted by Baghawī. Tafsīr Maẓharī gives a plain and simple explication of this verse: Allah has equipped every *jinn* and man with the innate capacity to worship. Some use the capacity rightly and succeed, while others employ it wrongly in sinning and fulfilling their base emotions, and thus destroy it. The Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ

"Every child is born according to the *fitrah* but his parents [cause him to deviate from the unadulterated propensity] and

turn him into a Jew or a Christian or a Magian."

According to the majority of the scholars, *fitrah* here refers to the religion of Islam. Just as this Tradition tells us that every man is born with the natural capacity for Islam and true faith, but his parents adulterate and destroy that capacity, and put him on to the ways of disbelief, in the same way the phrase 'except that they should worship Me' could mean that every member of jinn and mankind has the natural, inborn capacity to worship. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Answer to the second question is that bringing any creation into being for the purpose of worship does not necessarily imply that they are unfit for other functions of life.

مَآ أُرِيْدُ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ رِّزْقٍ (I do not want any sustenance from them, nor do I want them to feed Me...51:57). It means that by creating *jinn* and mankind, Allah does not stand in need of them, so that they will have to produce sustenance for Him or for themselves or for any of His other creations or that they earn to feed Him. This has been stated according to the general trend of people. The most affluent of men buys a slave and spends on him not for nothing, but he has an underlying purpose: He expects the slaves to work for him, help him in his tasks, fulfil his needs and earn livelihood for his master. Allah is immaculate, pure and above all these things. In creating human beings, He does not profit or benefit anything.

The word ذَنُوب *dhanūb* in verse 59 is with *fath* on the letter [*dh*] which means a large bucket that is kept at the common wells of a locality for the purpose of drawing and filling water. A turn is designated for each of the persons using the large common bucket to draw out water from the well, so that he is conveniently able to fill it in his own private bucket in his turn. Thus the word here is employed in the sense of turn, share or portion. Hence it is translated above as follows: "So, those who did wrong deserve a share (in the punishment) like the share of their companions." The verse purports to warn the disbelievers that the past communities were given an opportunity to work. When each of these communities did not take advantage of the opportunity in their respective time and persisted in their evil course, they were punished and destroyed. Likewise, the present pagans of Makkah are designated a time and opportunity. If

they do not take advantage of the allocated time and opportunity and persist in their paganism, they will be punished in this world; otherwise the punishment of the Hereafter is most certain. They will thus meet with a fate similar to that of the opponents of former Prophets. Like them they will come to a sad end. This verse, in which the word *dhanūban* occurs, indicates that they will receive their due share of the torment, and it will surely come in due time; so they should not ask for it to be hastened on or rushed to them.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt
Ends here

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr

(The Mount)

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr was revealed in Makkah It has 49 Verses and 2 Sections.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 28

وَالطُّوْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَكِتٰبٍ مَّسْطُوْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ فِیْ رَقٍّ مَّنْشُوْرٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَّالْبَیْتِ
الْمَعْمُوْرِ ﴿٤﴾ وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوْعِ ﴿٥﴾ وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُوْرِ ﴿٦﴾ اِنَّ
عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ ﴿٧﴾ مَّا لَهٗ مِنْ دَافِعٍ ﴿٨﴾ یَّوْمَ تَمُوْرُ السَّمَآءُ مَوْرًا
﴿٩﴾ وَّتَسِیْرُ الْجِبَالُ سَیْرًا ﴿١٠﴾ فَوَیْلٌ یَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِیْنَ ﴿١١﴾
الَّذِیْنَ هُمْ فِیْ خَوْضٍ یَّلْعَبُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ یَوْمَ یُدَعُّوْنَ اِلٰی نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعًّا
﴿١٣﴾ هٰذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِیْ كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ اَفَسِحْرٌ هٰذَآ اَمْ اَنْتُمْ
لَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ اِصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوْٓا اَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوْا ۚ سَوَآءٌ عَلَیْكُمْ ؕ
اِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِیْنَ فِیْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّنَعِیْمٍ
﴿١٧﴾ فٰكِهِیْنَ بِمَآ اٰتٰهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ ۚ وَوَقٰهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِیْمِ
﴿١٨﴾ كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا هَنِیْٓـًٔا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ مُتَّكِـِٕیْنَ عَلٰی
سُرُرٍ مَّصْفُوْفَةٍ ۚ وَزَوَّجْنٰهُمْ بِحُوْرٍ عِیْنٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَالَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّیَّتُهُمْ بِاِیْمَانٍ اَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّیَّتَهُمْ وَمَآ اَلَتْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ

عَمَلِهِم مِّن شَىْءٍ ۚ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ ﴿٢١﴾ وَأَمْدَدْنَٰهُم
بِفَٰكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ يَتَنَٰزَعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَّا لَغْوٌ
فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْثِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَّهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ
مَّكْنُونٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَسَآءَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالُوٓا إِنَّا
كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِىٓ أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَىٰنَا عَذَابَ
السَّمُومِ ﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِن قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٨﴾

By the mount of Ṭūr, [1] and by a book, written [2] on an unrolled scroll, [3] and by the Populated House (Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr), [4] and by the roof, raised high, [5] and by the sea, filled up with fire, [6] the punishment of your Lord is sure to fall. [7] There is nothing to push it back, [8] the Day when the sky will tremble, a horrible trembling, [9] and the mountains will move about, a terrible movement. [10] So, woe to those who reject (the true faith), [11] who are indulged in vain talk, playing (with truth), [12] the Day they will be pushed to the Fire forcefully, [13] (and it will be said to them,) "This is the Fire you used to deny. [14] Is it then magic, or do you not see? [15] Enter it. Now, whether you act patient or impatient, it is all the same for you; you are merely rewarded for what you used to do." [16] Of course, the God-fearing will be in gardens and bliss, [17] enjoying what their Lord will give to them, and their Lord will save them from the punishment of Hell. [18] (It will be said to them,) "Eat and drink pleasantly because of what you used to do, [19] relaxing on lined up couches". And We will marry them with big-eyed houris. [20] And those who believed and their children followed them in belief, We will join their children with them, and will not curtail (the reward of) any of their deeds at all. Every person will be pledged for what he earned. [21] And We will give them a lot of what they desire from fruits and meat. [22] They will snatch from one another (in a friendly manner) a glass (of wine) in which there is neither an absurd talk, nor something leading to sin. [23] And they will be frequented by the serving boys of their own, (neat and clean) as if they were hidden pearls. [24] And they will advance to one another, asking (about each other). [25] They will say, "Indeed we were

afraid (of Allah's punishment) when we were amidst of our family, [26] **but Allah did favour to us and saved us from the torment of Fire's scorching breath.** [27] **We used to pray to Him before. He is surely the Most-Kind, the Very-Merciful.** [28]

Commentary

وَالطُّوْرِ (By the Mount *Ṭūr*,....52:1) The word Ṭūr in Hebrew means a mountain that has trees [as opposed to *jabal* a mountain that does not have trees {Trn.}]. Here *Ṭūr* stands for mount Sinai which is situated in the land of Madyan where the Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام had the honour of Allah's speaking to him. Some reports narrate that there are four mountains of Paradise in this world, and one of them is *Ṭūr* (Qurṭubī). Swearing an oath by *Ṭūr* carries a special significance and honour of the mount. It also signifies that certain injunctions have been revealed by Allah for people to follow. Compliance with them is obligatory.

وَكِتٰبٍ مَّسْطُوْرٍ فِىْ رَقٍّ مَّنْشُوْرٍ (and by a book, written on an unrolled scroll....52:2-3) The word *raqq* means fine parchment or fine piece of skin, used for the purpose of writing on it. It is, therefore, usually translated as paper. Here it could be referring to man's account-book of deeds or, according to some of the scholars, it stands for the Qur'ān. (Qurṭubī)

Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr

وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُوْرِ (and by the Populated House [Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr],...52:4) *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr* is the *Ka'bah* in the heaven meant for the angels' service and is parallel to the *Ka'bah* on earth. According to a Tradition in Ṣaḥīḥain that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said about his Ascension to the seventh heaven: "Then, I was taken to *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr*. It is visited every day by seventy thousand angels who will not come back to visit it again " because every day other new angels take their turn to visit it. (Ibn Kathīr)

Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr is the *Ka'bah* of the angels who reside in the seventh heaven. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached the seventh heaven on the Night of Ascension, he saw Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام reclining with his back on *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr*. It was Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام who built the *Ka'bah* on earth, and thus the reward is compatible with his action in that Allah Ta'ālā has blessed him with a special connection with *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr* (Ibn Kathīr).

وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُوْرِ (and by the sea, filled up with fire...52:6) The word *baḥr* means sea and the passive participle *masjūr* is derived from *sajr* which is used in several different senses, one of which is to kindle with fire. Some of the commentators interpret the participle in this sense here, that is, by the sea which will be kindled with fire on the Day of Resurrection, just as Allah said in another verse وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ "And when the seas will be kindled with fire". In other words, it will be kindled with fire and become a raging fire surrounding the people in the plain of hashr. This was reported by Sayyidnā Sa'id Ibn Musayyab from Sayyidnā 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭalib ﷺ. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, and 'Ubaidullāh Ibn 'Umair ﷺ also report likewise. (Ibn Kathīr)

A Jewish person asked Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ 'where is the Hell?'. He replied 'the sea'. The Jew, who was the scholar of the previous scriptures, confirmed this. (Qurṭubī) Sayyidnā Qatādah ﷺ and others interpreted the phrase to mean 'filled sea'. Ibn Jarīr رحمه الله تعالیٰ preferred this interpretation (Ibn Kathīr). ' This is the interpretation adopted by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالیٰ.

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ مَّا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ (the punishment of your Lord is sure to fall. There is nothing to push it back,....52:7-8) Verses 1-6 constituted swearing of an oath, and the present verse is *jawab-ul-qasam* or the fact for which the oath is sworn, assuring that the torment of Allah will come to pass, and none will be able to avert it.

The Incident of Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ

Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ one day recited Sūrah Ṭūr. When he came to these verses, he heaved a cool sigh after which he fell ill for about twenty days. During his illness the people would visit him, not knowing what caused his illness. (Ibn Kathīr)

Sayyidnā Jubair Ibn Muṭ'im ﷺ says that before embracing Islam, he once went to the holy city of Madinah to negotiate regarding the prisoners of the battle of Badr. When he arrived there, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was reciting Sūrah Ṭūr in Maghrib *ṣalāh* and his voice could be heard outside the mosque. When he recited verses [7] and [8]: 'The punishment of your Lord is sure to fall. There is nothing to push it back,' He suddenly felt that his heart would burst through fear. He instantly embraced Islam. He felt at the time that he would not be able to move unless the torment would descend on him. (Qurṭubī)

يَوْمَ تَمُوْرُ السَّمَآءُ مَوْرًا (...the Day when the sky will tremble, a horrible trembling, ...52:9) The lexicographical denotation of the word *mawr* is violent shaking, or movement caused by unrest. This verse describes the violent movement of the heavens on the Day of Resurrection.

The Believing Children of the Righteous will benefit from their relationship with their Believing Parents in Paradise

وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِاِيْمَانٍ اَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ (And those who believed and their children followed them in belief, We will join their children with them,... 52:21) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbas ﷺ reports from the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said:

> "Verily, Allah elevates the ranks of the believers' children to the rank of their parents, even though the latter do not deserve the same rank as their parents deserve, so that the eyes of the parents are comforted." (Ḥākim, al-Baihaqī in his Sunan, al-Bazzār, Abū Nu'aim in al-Ḥilyah, ibn-Jarīr and ibn-Abī Ḥātim as quoted by Mazharī [Tr.])

It is recorded in Ṭabarānī that Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رحمه الله تعالى reports "Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said, [and I think he reports this from the Holy Prophet ﷺ] :

> "When a person enters Paradise, he will inquire about his parents, and wife and children [as to where they are]. He will be told that they have not attained your grade. [Therefore, their place is elsewhere in Paradise]. The person will say: 'O Lord! I had worked not only for myself, but for all of them.' Allah will command that they all be kept together with him in the same rank of Paradise." (Ibn Kathīr)

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn-Kathīr, having quoted all these Traditions, says that it is certainly Allah's grace and favour that He grants the children this blessing because of the righteous deeds of their parents. He also grants His favour to parents on account of their children's praying Allah for them. Imām Aḥmad has recorded that Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ has reported the following statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ .

> "Verily, Allah shall elevate the grade of a righteous servant in Paradise, who will ask: 'O Lord! How did I earn this?' Allah will reply: 'Through your son's invoking Me to forgive you.'" (ibn-Kathīr says that this Tradition has an authentic chain of transmitters, but was not recorded in Ṣaḥīḥain this way. However there is a corroborating narration (*shāhid*) for it in

Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah. [Tr.])

وَمَآ اَلَتْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ (...and will not curtail (the reward of) any of their deeds at all...52:21) The past perfect verb *alatna* is the first person plural of *alāta* which literally means to decrease, to reduce or to diminish (Qurṭubī). The verse means that for upgrading the children of the believers who died in the state of true faith, no part of the reward of their parents will be diminished for them to make up for the children's deeds. In fact, this equalization will take place as a result of Allah's grace.

Allah's Fairness to Sinners

كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِيْنٌ (Every person will be pledged for what he earned.) After Allah mentioned His favour of elevating the children to the ranks of their parents, even though the deeds of the former did not qualify them, He affirmed His fairness in that, He does not punish anyone for the sins of others. Therefore, every person will be responsible for his actions. No sins committed by others shall ever be added to one's load, even if committed by his parents or children. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 29 - 49

فَذَكِّرْ فَمَآ اَنْتَ بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَّلَا مَجْنُوْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
شَاعِرٌ نَّتَرَبَّصُ بِهٖ رَيْبَ الْمَنُوْنِ ﴿٣٠﴾ قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوْا فَاِنِّيْ مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْمُتَرَبِّصِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ اَمْ تَاْمُرُهُمْ اَحْلَامُهُمْ بِهٰذَآ اَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُوْنَ
﴿٣٢﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ تَقَوَّلَهٗ ۚ بَلْ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَلْيَاْتُوْا بِحَدِيْثٍ مِّثْلِهٖٓ
اِنْ كَانُوْا صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اَمْ خُلِقُوْا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ اَمْ هُمُ الْخٰلِقُوْنَ
﴿٣٥﴾ اَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ ۚ بَلْ لَّا يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ
خَزَآئِنُ رَبِّكَ اَمْ هُمُ الْمُصَيْطِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَّسْتَمِعُوْنَ فِيْهِ ۚ
فَلْيَاْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ اَمْ لَهُ الْبَنٰتُ وَلَكُمُ الْبَنُوْنَ
﴿٣٩﴾ اَمْ تَسْئَلُهُمْ اَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّغْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ اَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ
الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ اَمْ يُرِيْدُوْنَ كَيْدًا ۭ فَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا هُمُ

الْمَكِيدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ ۚ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ
﴿٤٣﴾ وَإِن يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ
﴿٤٤﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ يَوْمَ
لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاصْبِرْ
لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا ۖ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ ﴿٤٨﴾
وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ ﴿٤٩﴾

So keep reminding (them), because by the grace of your Lord, you are neither a soothsayer, nor a madman. [29] **Do they rather say, "He is a poet for whom we are awaiting the accident of death."?** [30] **Say, "Wait! I am waiting with you, too."** [31] **Do their intellects direct them to (say) this, or are they a rebellious people?** [32] **Do they rather say, "He has forged it (the Qur'ān.)"? No, but they do not believe.** [33] **So, let them bring a discourse like this, if they are truthful.** [34] **Is it that they are created by none, or are they themselves the creators?** [35] **Or have they created the heavens and the earth? No, but they are sure of nothing.** [36] **Or do they have the treasures of your Lord, or have they acquired control (over them)?**[1] [37] **Or have they a stairway (to the heavens) by means of which they listen (to the divine decrees)? If so, their listener must bring a clear proof.** [2] [38] **Is it that He has daughters and you have sons?** [39] **Or is it that you (O prophet) ask them for a**

{1} This is an answer to one of the objections frequently raised by the disbelievers of Makkah against the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They used to ask why he was chosen for messengership, and not one of the outstanding chiefs of the tribe. The answer given in this verse is that the selection of prophets is the exclusive prerogative of Allah. He has the treasures of knowledge, and it is He who decides to whom they should be given. The attitude of those who raise objections against His decision is tantamount to claiming that the disposal of these treasures should have been in their hands, and they should have the decisive power to select prophets. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

{2} It means that their arguments against Islam having failed on rational grounds, the only possibility was that they had a direct link with Allah whereby they have ensured that their faith was true, but no one could bring any proof of having such a link with Allah. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

fee, and therefore they are burdened with a debt? [40] **Or have they the knowledge of the Unseen, and they are recording it?** [41] **Or do they intend to conspire (against the prophet)? Then the disbelievers themselves shall be the victim of the conspiracy.** [42] **Or do they have a god other than Allah? Pure is Allah from what they associate with Him.** [43] **And even if they see a piece falling down from the sky, they would say, "It is a cumulated cloud."** [44][3] **So, leave them until they face their Day in which they will be struck by a thunderbolt,** [45] **the Day their planning will not avail them in the least, nor will they be helped.** [46] **And for those who did wrong there is another punishment before that,[4] but most of them do not know.** [47] **And (O prophet) be patient about the decision of your Lord, because you are before Our Eyes. And proclaim the purity of your Lord along with His praise when you stand (in Prayer),** [48] **And, in parts of night too, proclaim His purity, and at setting of the stars.** [49]

Commentary

فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا (...you are before Our Eyes....) The hostility of the enemies towards, and their opposition to, and rejection of the Holy Prophet ﷺ depressed him. At the conclusion of the chapter, the Qur'ān says 'You are before Our eyes', that is, under Our care and We shall protect you from every evil. Do not be anxious about it. On another occasion, the Qur'ān says, وَاللّٰهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ 'And Allah shall protect you from the people'.

Then the verse goes on to say, وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِيْنَ تَقُوْمُ (And proclaim the purity of your Lord along with His praise when you stand [in Prayer]... 48]. To proclaim the purity and praise of Allah is the real purpose of life, and also the real cure of every calamity. Thus the Qur'ān enjoins it upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ. 'When you stand' could mean to stand up for the *Ṣalāh* or to arise or get up from sleep or bed. The latter meaning is

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{3} This points out to the demand of the pagans of Makkah that they would not believe in the Holy Holy Prophet ﷺ unless he brings some pieces of the sky falling down from above. (See 17:92 and 26:187 in the Qur'ān) The answer given is that even if Allah fulfils this absurd demand, they would still not believe and would seek other excuses like claiming that the mass they are seeing is nothing but a cloud. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

{4} It refers to the punishments faced by the disbelievers right in this world, like famines and the deterrent defeat in the battle of Badr. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

preferred by Ibn Jarīr. This view is supported by the Tradition recorded in the Musnad of Imām Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Ubadah Ibn Samit ﷺ who reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: ""Whoever gets up at night and recites:

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَاشَرِيْكَ لَهٗ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْر،
سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَلَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَاللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ

> 'There is no God except Allah. He is One without partners. For Him is the kingdom and all praise is due to Him. He has power over all things. Glory be to Allah and all praise is due to Allah, and there is no God except Allah, and Allah is the Greatest. There is neither might nor power except with Allah.'"

Then, if he intends to pray, and performs prayer after ablution, the prayers will be accepted. (Ibn Kathīr)

Kaffārat-ul-Majlis: A recitation at the end of a meeting that expiates sins

Sayyidnā Mujāhid, Abūl Aḥwaṣ and other leading authorities on Tafsīr have interpreted "when you stand" in this verse to mean that when a person wants to stand from a gathering or a meeting, he should recite: سُبْحَانَكَ اللّٰهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ 'I proclaim Your Purity, O Allah, along with Your praise'. Sayyidnā 'Aṭā' Ibn Abī Rabāḥ, interpreting this verse, has said:

> "When you stand from a gathering, proclaim the purity and praise of Allah. If you have done any good work, your good work will be increased and enhanced. If you had done any bad deed, these words of proclamation will serve as an expiation and atonement".

On the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

> "Whoever sits in a gathering in which he speaks idle excessively, but says before he stands up to depart that gathering, سُبْحَانَكَ اللّٰهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَاَتُوْبُ اِلَيْكَ ('I proclaim Your Purity, O Allah, along with Your praise', I testify that there is no God except You, I seek Your forgiveness, I repent to You.') Allah will forgive him what he has said in that gathering ".

وَمِنَ الَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ (And, in parts of night too, proclaim His purity, and at setting of the stars...52:49) 'Proclaiming the purity of the Lord in parts of

night' includes Maghrib and 'Isha' prayers, as well as the general *tasbīḥāt* (proclamation of the purity of the Lord). The concluding part of this verse; وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُوْمِ "...and at setting of the stars" refers to the *Fajr* prayer and the *tasbīḥāt* recited at that time. (Ibn Kathīr)

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr
Ends here

Sūrah An-Najm

(The Star)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 62 verses and 3 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 18

وَالنَّجْمِ اِذَا هَوٰى ﴿١﴾ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوٰى ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ
عَنِ الْهَوٰى ﴿٣﴾ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُّوْحٰى ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَهٗ شَدِيْدُ الْقُوٰى
﴿٥﴾ ذُوْ مِرَّةٍ ط فَاسْتَوٰى ﴿٦﴾ وَهُوَ بِالْاُفُقِ الْاَعْلٰى ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ دَنٰى
فَتَدَلّٰى ﴿٨﴾ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ اَوْ اَدْنٰى ﴿٩﴾ فَاَوْحٰى اِلٰى عَبْدِهٖ مَا
اَوْحٰى ﴿١٠﴾ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَاٰى ﴿١١﴾ اَفَتُمٰرُوْنَهٗ عَلٰى مَا يَرٰى
﴿١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ نَزْلَةً اُخْرٰى ﴿١٣﴾ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهٰى ﴿١٤﴾ عِنْدَهَا
جَنَّةُ الْمَاْوٰى ﴿١٥﴾ اِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشٰى ﴿١٦﴾ مَازَاغَ الْبَصَرُ
وَمَا طَغٰى ﴿١٧﴾ لَقَدْ رَاٰى مِنْ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرٰى ﴿١٨﴾

**By the star when it goes down to set, [1] your
companion (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) has neither missed
the way, nor did he deviate. [2] And he does not speak
out of (his own) desire. [3] It is not but revelation
revealed (to him). [4] It is taught to him by one (angel) of
strong faculties, [5] one of vigour. So he stood poised, [6]
while he was on the upper horizon. [7] Then he drew
near, and came down, [8] so as he was at a distance
between two bows (joined together), rather even nearer.
[9] Thus He (Allah) revealed to His slave what He**

revealed. [10] **The heart did not err in what he saw.** [11] **Do you quarrel with him in what he sees?** [12] **And indeed he saw him another time** [13] **by *sidrat-ul-muntaha* (the lote-tree in the upper realm),** [14] **near which there is *Jannat-ul-ma'wa* (the Paradise of Abode),** [15] **when the lote-tree was covered by that which covered it.** [16] **The eye neither went wrong, nor did exceed the limit.** [17] **He has indeed seen a part of the biggest signs of your Lord.** [18]

Characteristics of Sūrah An-Najm

Sūrah An-Najm is the first chapter that the Holy Prophet ﷺ proclaimed in Makkah (ʻAbdullāh Ibn Masʻūd ؓ has transmitted it - as in Qurṭubī) and this is the first Sūrah in which a verse of *sajdah* (prostration) is revealed. The Holy Prophet ﷺ recited it and prostrated. A strange thing happened on this occasion: When the Holy Prophet ﷺ finished reciting the Sūrah before a mixed gathering of Muslims and disbelievers, and, along with his followers, he prostrated himself on the ground. The disbelievers too prostrated, except one proud and arrogant man (regarding whose name there is a difference of opinion (Tr.)) who took a handful of soil and, having applied it on his forehead, said, 'this is enough'. ʻAbdullāh Ibn Masʻūd ؓ [the transmitter of the Tradition] said that he saw this man lying dead in the state of disbelief [*kufr*]. (Bukhārī, Muslim and other compilers of Sunan - Ibn-Kathīr [condensed])

At the outset of this Sūrah, the truth of the Qur'ānic revelation and of the Divine claim is sought to be established. In a very exquisite and forceful style, it is stated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a true Messenger of Allah, and there is no room for any doubt about this.

Allah Swears that the Messenger is True

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوٰى (By the star when it goes down to set,.... 53:1) The word *najm* means a star, and as a common noun every star is referred to as *najm*, and in that case the plural is *nujum*. There are however occasions when *najm* specifically refers to *thurayyā*. In this case it is used as a proper noun and it signifies "the Pleiades" which is a loose cluster of many (hundred) stars, (six of which are visible to ordinary sight). In this context, some scholars, taking the word as a proper noun, interpret *najm* as *thurayyā*. Farrā' and Ḥasan Baṣrī prefer the first interpretation, and take the word as a common noun (Qurṭubī). This is the interpretation that

is adopted in the translation.

The verb *hawā* means to fall or plunge. When stars fall, they set. In this verse Allah swears an oath to show that the Messenger is true, and his words are a revelation from Allah, in which there is no room for any doubt. In Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt it has been explained in detail that the Creator, for various wise reasons, swears by whatever He wills among His creation, but His created beings only swear by the Creator. They are not allowed to swear by anything else. Here Allah has sworn an oath by the stars. Probably, the underlying wisdom in this is that as the Arabs are used to determine the course and direction of, and are guided in their travels by the movements of the stars in the sandy waste of Arabia, so they would now be led to the goal and end of their spiritual journey by the star *par excellence,* that is, by the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

مَاضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوٰى (your companion [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] has neither missed the way, nor did he deviate. [53:2] Verse [1] was *qasam* or oath and verse [2] is *jawāb-ul-qasam* or the subject for which oath is sworn. The verse means that the path towards which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is calling the people is the perfectly straight path leading to the desired goal of Allah's good pleasure. He is following the right guidance and has not deviated from the path of righteousness.

The Reason for Describing the Holy Prophet ﷺ as 'your companion'

The Qur'ān on this occasion, when referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, does not refer to him by his blessed name or refer to him as a Messenger or a Holy Prophet. In fact, it refers to him as *Ṣāḥibukum* or "your companion". In this there seems to be a subtle rebuke to the pagans of Makkah, telling them in effect that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not an outsider, nor a stranger to them. He was their constant companion. He was born amongst them, he spent his childhood amongst them, and he grew up as a youth amongst them. He has lived among them a whole life-time, and they had always looked upon him as a paragon of honesty, integrity and truthfulness calling him "امین" (The Honest One). But now – after his claim of Prophethood – they dare impute to him such a heinous sin as forging lies against Allah. A man who withheld himself from telling lies about men, how could he possibly forge lies against Allah? How inconsistent is their attitude?

The Holy Prophet's Words are a Revelation from Allah

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُّوْحٰى (And he does not speak out of (his own) desire. It is not but revelation revealed [to him]....53:3-4] The verses tell us that it is absolutely impossible for the Messenger ﷺ to forge lies and impute them to Allah. Nothing he utters is of his own wish or desire. He only conveys to the people what he was commanded to convey, in its entirety, without additions or deletions. An analysis of the various Traditions in Bukhārī indicates that there are many categories or types of *waḥy* [inspiration or revelation]. Type one is that in which the wordings and the meaning are both directly from Allah. This is called Qur'ān. Type two is the one in which only the meaning comes from Allah, and the Messenger ﷺ expresses the meaning in his own words. This is called Ḥadīth or Sunnah [Tradition]. The subject of Ḥadīth, which comes from Allah, sometimes lays down injunctions or rules of conduct in clear and express terms, and at other times it establishes a general principle from which the Messenger ﷺ derives laws on the basis of *ijtihād* or anology, and promulgates them. In this there does exist the possibility of mistake of judgement. But it is the characteristic of the Messenger ﷺ and other Prophets عليهم السلام that if they commit any error of judgement, Allah sends down a revelation to amend it, so that they do not unwittingly persist in their mistaken *ijtihād*. Unlike other scholars of *ijtihād*, who can persist in their erroneous conclusions. However, their error is not only forgiven, but they also receive one reward for exerting their utmost effort in comprehending the rule of religion to the fullest extent, as authentic and well-known Traditions bear testimony to this fact.

The foregoing discussion also allays the following doubt: It seems, according to the above verses, that the Messenger ﷺ does not speak of his own desire, but whatever he conveys to the people is a revelation from Allah. It follows from this that he does not exercise independent reasoning in any matter whatsoever, whereas authentic Traditions show otherwise. There are incidents recorded that at the beginning, he promulgated one law, but, later on, revelation descended and the law was changed. This is an indication that the earlier law was not the law of Allah, but it was based on his *ijtihād*. The foregoing paragraph already responded to this objection: The second type of revelation establishes a general principle of law from which the Messenger ﷺ derives laws on the basis of *ijtihād*, and

promulgates them. Because the general principle has descended from Allah, all the laws are said to be the revelation from Allah. Allah knows best!

عَلَّمَهٗ شَدِيْدُ الْقُوٰى (It is taught to him by one [angel] of strong faculties,... 53:5) From here upto the eighteenth verse, لَقَدْ رَاٰى مِنْ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرٰى the subject-matter is the revelation from Allah. It has been established that the Qur'ān is a record of verbal revelation vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. There is no room for doubt about the fact that it is the very Words of Allah. It was sent down in such a way that no possibility of confusion or error ever existed.

Divergent Interpretation of the Verses of Najm

Regarding these verses of Sūrah Najm, two divergent interpretations of the leading commentators are reported. The summary of one interpretation is that all these verses relate to the incident of Mi'rāj (Ascension of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the heavens). As a result, words and phrases like شَدِيْدُ الْقُوٰى *shadīd-ul-quwā* (One of strong faculties), *dhū mirrah* (one of vigour) فَاسْتَوٰى *fastawā* (he stood poised), and دَنَا فَتَدَلّٰى *danā fatadallā* (then he drew near, and came down,) are all qualities and actions of Allah. (It means that Allah Ta'ālā has taught the Holy Prophet ﷺ directly without any media, and that he came close to Him. The Qur'ān further speaks of Vision [*ru'yah*] and Witnessing [*mushāhadah*]. They too have been taken to mean the Vision and Witnessing of Allah. Among the noble Companions, Sayyidnā Anas and Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما have adopted this interpretation. In Tafsīr Maẓharī too this interpretation has been given preference. Many noble Companions, *tabi'īn* [Companions' pupils] and other leading commentators, however, take these verses to refer to the event when the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw the noble angel Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape. According to them, شَدِيْدُ الْقُوٰى*shadīd-ul-quwā* (one of strong faculties), and other qualities and acts mentioned in these verses are the qualities of Jibra'īl عليه السلام. There are many factors in support of this interpretation. Historically, Sūrah An-Najm is one of the very early Sūrahs and, according to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, this is the first Sūrah the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited in public in the Sacred city of Makkah. Obviously, the incident of Mi'rāj took place much later. This argument, however, may be debatable. But the stronger proof in favor of the second interpretation is that in a tradition recorded in the Musnad of

Aḥmad, the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself interprets these verses that they relate to seeing the noble Jibra'īl عليه السلام

عَنِ الشَّعْبِی عَنْ مَسْرُوْق قَالَ كُنْتُ عِنْدَ عَائِشَةَ رضی اللّٰه عنها فَقُلْتُ اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ يَقُوْلُ (وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ بِالْاُفُقِ الْمُبِيْنِ، وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ نَزْلَةً اُخْرٰى) فَقَالَتْ اَنَا اَوَّلُ هٰذِهِ الْاُمَّة سَاَلْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْهَا فَقَالَ اِنَّمَا ذَاكَ جِبْرَئِيْلُ لَمْ يَرَهُ فِیْ صُوْرَتِهِ الَّتِیْ خُلِقَ عَلَيْهَا اِلَّا مَرَّتَيْنِ رَاٰهُ مُنْهَبِطًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ سَادًّا عِظَم خَلْقِهٖ مَابَيْنَ السَّمَآءِ وَ الْاَرْضِ، اَخرجاه فی الصّحيحين من حديث الشعبی. (ابن كثير)

Masrūq reports from Sha'bī رحمه اللّٰه تعالى: Masrūq ؓ said: "One day I was sitting with Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى اللّٰه عنها and I asked her. 'Did not Allah say وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ بِالْاُفُقِ الْمُبِين وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ نَزْلَةً اُخرٰى 'And indeed he saw him in the clear horizon' and 'Indeed he saw him another time' she replied: 'I was the first among the Ummah to ask the Holy Prophet ﷺ about it.' He said: 'That was Jibra'īl. He only saw him twice in his actual and real figure. He saw Jibra'īl descend from heaven to earth, and he was so huge that he covered the entire horizon between the sky and the earth." (Ibn-Kathīr)

The wordings of this narration in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim are almost the same as recorded above. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Hajar, in the chapter of Tafsīr of Fatḥ-ul-Bārī, has narrated this tradition on the authority of Ibn Marduwaih in the following words:

اَنَا اَوَّلُ مَنْ سَاَلَ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ هٰذَا، فَقُلْتُ: يَارَسُوْلَ! اللّٰهِ هَلْ رَاَيْتَ رَبَّكَ؟ فَقَالَ: لَا، اِنَّمَا رَاَيْتُ جِبْرَئِيْلَ مُنْهَبِطاً. (فتح البارى، ص ٤٩٣ ج٨)

Ṣiddīqah 'Ā'ishah رضى اللّٰه عنها says: "I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about It, and I said, 'Did you see your Lord?' He replied, 'No: I saw Jibra'īl descending.'" (Fatḥ-ul-Bārī vol, 8/p, 493)

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records that Shaibani asked Sayyidnā Zirr about the meaning of the verses فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ اَوْ اَدْنٰى فَاَوْحٰى اِلٰى عَبْدِهٖ مَآ اَوْحٰى (so as he was at a distance between two bows (joined together), rather even nearer. Thus He [Allah] revealed to His slave what He revealed - 53:9,10) He replied that 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ narrated to us that Muḥammad ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام having six hundred wings. Ibn Jarīr, with his own chain of transmitters, reports that Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ, interpreting the verse 11: مَاكَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَاٰى ("The heart did not err in what he saw") says that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام clad

in *rafraf* [green] garment filling the entire space between heaven and earth.

Ibn Kathīr's Findings

Ibn Kathīr has quoted all these narrations in his Tafsīr and said that in all the above-quoted verses perception and proximity refer to seeing and being close to Jibra'īl عليه السلام. From among the noble Companions, this is the view of the Mother of the Faithful Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها and of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Dharr Ghifārī, Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه and others. This is why Ibn Kathīr says:

> Vision and proximity in these verses refer to seeing and being close to Jibra'īl عليه السلام when the Holy Prophet ﷺ had seen him for the first time in his original shape. Then he saw him for the second time on the night of Mi'rāj near *Sidrat-ul-Muntaha* (Lote-tree of the Uppermost Boundary). He saw him the first time at the very beginning of his Prophethood when Jibra'īl عليه السلام descended with the very first installment of revelation, and delivered to him Sūrah Iqra'. After that, there was an interval which caused terrible grief and [spiritual] depression. As a result, time and again, the thought crossed his mind that he should go to the top of the mountain and fall from there and give his life away. Whenever such a situation arose, Jibra'īl عليه السلام called out to him invisibly from the air: 'O Muḥammad! You are Allah's Messenger; you are true; and I am Jibra'īl.' The voice would calm his heart, and recompose it. Whenever such a thought crossed his mind, Jibra'īl عليه السلام would comfort him by his voice. But the comforting and consoling were always invisible. One day Jibra'īl عليه السلام was in an open field at Baṭḥā' in his original shape with six hundred wings which had covered the entire horizon. Then Jibra'īl عليه السلام came close to Allah's Messenger, and delivered the Divine revelation to him. On that occasion, the reality of the greatness of Jibra'īl عليه السلام and his majestic value in the sight of Allah became manifest to Allah's Messenger ﷺ.

In short, Imām Ibn Kathīr himself, on the basis of the statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself and the views of the blessed Companions, preferred this interpretation of the above verses of Sūrah An-Najm, that

is, it refers to seeing Jibra'il عليه السلام and being close to him. This was the Holy Prophet's ﷺ first experience of seeing Jibra'il عليه السلام in this world on the horizon of Makkah. Some of the versions narrate that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw him in his actual and real shape for the first time, he became unconscious. Then Jibra'il عليه السلام came very close to him in the shape of a human being [and he regained consciousness].

The second incident of Holy Prophet's ﷺ seeing Jibra'il عليه السلام is mentioned in Verse 13 and 14 of this Sūrah in the following words: وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ نَزْلَةً اُخْرٰى عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهٰى (And indeed he saw him another time [13] by *sidrat-ul-muntaha* (the lote-tree in the upper realm), [14]". This verse mentions that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'il عليه السلام for the second time, and this happened on the Night of Ascension (Mi'rāj). On the basis of reasons stated above, the commentators generally adopt this interpretation. Ibn Kathīr's arguments have just been put forward. Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān, Imām Rāzī and others normally prefer this interpretation. My mentor Maulānā Ashraf Alī has also preferred this interpretation, the summary of which is that the earlier verses of Sūrah An-Najm which makes mention of *ru'yah* (seeing) does not refer to having a Vision of Allah, but of Jibra'il عليه السلام. Nawawī, in his commentary on Muslim, and Ḥāfiẓ in Fatḥ-ul-Bārī also have preferred this interpretation.

ذُوْمِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوٰى وَهُوَ بِالْاُفُقِ الْاَعْلٰى (one of vigour. So he stood poised, while he was on the upper horizon...53:6-7] The word *mirrah* means 'strength' or 'vigour'. This is another quality of Jibra'il عليه السلام, in that he is no weakling, but strong, mighty in power and firm, so that it may not be suspected that the devil may intercept the angel carrying the Divine revelation and snatch it away from him. Jibra'il عليه السلام is so mighty in power and strength that the devil dare not come anywhere near him. The word اِسْتَوٰى *istawā* means to be or become straight or to level. The verse means that when he saw Jibra'il عليه السلام the first time, the latter was descending from the heaven. Having descended, he sat or settled straight on the highest part of the horizon. *Ufuq* [horizon] is qualified by *a'lā* [the highest part or uppermost] and it signifies that Jibra'il عليه السلام was shown on the uppermost horizon, [so that he could be seen clearly] because the lower part of the horizon which seems to be adjacent to the earth is normally hidden from the sight [as a result he would not have been visible to the Holy Prophet ﷺ].

ثُمَّ دَنٰى فَتَدَلّٰى (Then he drew near, and came down,... 53:8). The word *danā* means to draw near and *tadalla* means to hang or to come down. The verse means that Jibra'īl عليه السلام drew near by coming down.

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ اَوْ اَدْنٰى (so as he was at a distance between two bows (joined together), rather even nearer....53:9). The noun *qāb* refers to the distance between the curved handle of a bow and the tight chord that releases arrows. This distance is estimated about the length of one hand. The expression *qāba qawsain* is based on an ancient Arab custom, according to which when two persons pledged themselves to firm friendship, each one of them would turn the wooden part of their bows towards themselves, but they would turn the chord part towards the other. In this way when the chords of their bows were joined together, this used to be regarded as the proclamation of proximity, love and affection at the time of which the distance between the two persons would be two bows' length - approximately the length of two arms or one cubit. The expression *aw adnā* ('rather even nearer') signifies that the relationship of closeness was no ordinary one, it in fact was more intimate than could be conceived. The reason for the mention of such intimacy with Jibra'īl عليه السلام in the above verses is to confirm that the revelation which he delivered is indubitably and truly from Allah, and he heard it with absolute accuracy in every detail: There is no room for any doubt in this. This closeness and intimacy further allays the suspicion that the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have not recognized Jibra'īl عليه السلام and that the devil might interfere.

فَاَوْحٰى اِلٰى عَبْدِهٖ مَا اَوْحٰى (Thus He [Allah] revealed to His slave what He revealed... 53:10) The subject pronoun understood in the past perfect verb *awḥā* (He revealed) refers to Allah, and so does the pronoun in *'abdihī* (His slave), and the verse means: Allah revealed to His servant Muḥammad ﷺ whatever He revealed through the medium of Jibra'īl عليه السلام by attaching him so intimately to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

An Academic Problem and its Solution

Here an apparent problem arises which at best can be described as academic, because it does not relate to a real situation. According to an overwhelming consensus of the *Mufassirīn* and *Muḥaddithīn*, all the pronouns in the above verses refer to Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Likewise, all the pronouns in the sentences from فَاسْتَوٰى *fastawā* to فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ اَوْ اَدْنٰى *fa kāna qāba qawsaini aw adnā* refer to him. The forthcoming verses,

according to consensus of the commentators, also speak of Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Therefore, referring the intervening pronouns of *awhā* and *'abdihī* is contrary to the context and causes *intishār-uḍ-ḍamā'ir* (inconsistency of the pronouns).

Our honourable mentor Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Anwar Shah Kashmirī رحمه الله تعالیٰ has responded to this problem thus: There is neither any contextual confusion here, nor any pronominal ambiguity. In point of fact, early part of Sūrah An-Najm in verse [4] it was mentioned إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُّوحٰى (It is not but revelation revealed [to him]...4)'. Now in verse [10] أَوْحٰى إِلٰى عَبْدِهٖ مَا أَوْحٰى (So He [Allah] revealed to His servant whatever He revealed.) the same theme is continued, reinforced and consolidated in this way: Obviously, the One who sends down revelation is Allah Ta'ālā and none else. However, there is a medium through whom the revelation is delivered to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Verse [4] may be treated as a preamble to the theme of revelation. Verses [5-9] describe the strong qualities and other characteristics of the medium of revelation Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Verse [10] is thus the complement or epilogue to the preamble. In this verse there cannot be *intishār-uḍ-ḍamā'ir* because the antecedents of the pronouns in verse 10 cannot possibly be anyone but Allah. Thus the antecedent of these pronouns was determined from the very outset. In the phrase *māawḥā* 'whatever He revealed' is obscure or vague. *Mā* [whatever] is sometimes used to denote honour, surprise, magnificence, grandeur, splendor, opulence or for emphasis. Here it is employed to indicate 'the majestic or glorious status of revelation'.

It is learnt from a Ḥadīth recorded in chapter [1] of the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, that the revelation which was sent down at this time was the initial verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir [Chapter 74]. Allah knows best!

Thus marked by thematic and structural coherence, the Qur'ān confirms that it is an absolutely true and veritable words of Allah. This may be compared to the Muhaddithins' study of Ḥadīth. In order to verify the authenticity of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ they trace in full the chains of authorities from themselves [that is, the last of the authorities] to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In these verses Allah sets up the chain of authorities: [1] Allah is the *Mūḥī*, that is, He is the Ultimate Source from where the revelation originates; and [2] Jibra'īl عليه السلام is the transmitting authority between Allah and the Messenger of Allah. The

above verses describe Jibra'īl ﷺ as magnificent in status and mighty in power: This confirms his honesty and integrity as the transmitting authority.

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَاٰى (The heart did not err in what he saw....53:11) *Fu'ād* means heart, and the verse means whatever the eyes saw, the heart did not err in its grasping. This erring in the verse is described as *kidhb* [lying]. In other words, the heart did not lie in connection with the perceived objects. It did not err or slip up. In the phrase *mā ra'ā* 'what he saw', the Qur'ān does not specify what it saw. The blessed Companions and their followers, and the leading authorities on Tafsīr hold two divergent views as was discussed in detail earlier: [1] The phrase means it [the Holy Prophet's ﷺ heart] saw Allah (and this is the view of Ibn 'Abbās); and [2] others (like Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah, Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Hurairah and Abū Dharr Ghifārī ؓ) express the view that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'īl ﷺ in his original shape. The Arabic verb *ra'ā* originally means to see with physical eyes, and after having seen with physical eyes the heart grasps and comprehends. Thus the Holy Prophet ﷺ first saw Jibra'īl ﷺ with his physical eyes, and then grasped and comprehended him with his heart. Therefore, there is no need to take the word *ru'yah* in the figurative or metaphorical sense of *ru'yah qalbiyah* [to see with the heart] as did Al-Qurṭubī.

One more question remains: In this verse *idrāk* [grasping, comprehending, discerning, cognizing and perceiving] has been attributed to the heart, whereas according to most famous philosophers, it is related to *'aql* [the intellect] or the soul endowed with the faculty of speech. Answer to this question is that many verses of the Qur'ān show that the real centre of *idrāk* is the heart. Therefore, sometimes the word '*qalb* (heart) is used for *'aql* (intellect), as for example the word *qalb* (plural: *qulūb*) in the following verses bear ample testimony to this fact: لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهٗ قَلْبٌ (for him who has a heart - 50:37) and لَهُمْ قُلُوْبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُوْنَ بِهَا 'they have hearts with which they do not comprehend' - (7:179). *Qalb* (heart) here refers to *'aql* (intellect) because heart is the centre of intellectual activities.

وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ نَزْلَةً اُخْرٰى، عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهٰى (And indeed he saw him another time by *sidrat-ul-muntahā* [the lote-tree in the upper realm]...53:13-14). Here too there are two views regarding the antecedent of the pronoun *hu* (him):

[1] that it refers to seeing Allah; or [2] that it refers to seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام. The adverb نَزْلَةً أُخْرىٰ *nazlatan 'ukhrā* [another time or at another descent], according to overwhelming majority, this *nuzūl* refers to the second descent of Jibra'īl عليه السلام. The first vision was experienced in this world on the uppermost horizon of Makkah. The second vision was experienced on the seventh heaven near the Lote-Tree of the Uppermost Realm. Obviously, the Holy Prophet ﷺ went up to the seventh heaven on the Night of Mi'rāj. Thus it is possible to determine the approximate time of the second experience, which took place on that occasion. The word *sidrah* literally denotes lote-tree and *muntaha* means the place of *intihā'* [end]. Thus *sidrat-ul-muntahā* is the Lote-Tree on the seventh heaven under the Throne of the Gracious Allah. According to a narration in Muslim, the Tree is on the sixth heaven. Reconciliation is possible between the two apparently conflicting versions in that its root is on the sixth heaven and its branches are spread on the seventh heaven (Qurṭubī). Generally the access of angels ends at this point, and therefore, it is called *muntahā* (the end). Some Traditions inform us that the Divine injunctions first descend from the Divine Throne to the *sidrat-ul-muntahā* which are handed over to the relevant angels. Similarly, angels going up from the earth to the heaven with Books of Deeds etc. convey them to this point. Then there may be some other way for their presentation to Allah Almighty. This subject is reported from 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه as recorded by Imām Aḥmad in his Musnad.

عِندَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوٰى (near which there is *Jannat-ul-ma'wā* [the Paradize of Abode],... 53:15) The word *ma'wā* means 'abode' and a place where one resides or reposes comfortably. The *Jannah* (Paradize) is called مَأْوىٰ *ma'wa* because this is man's original abode. This is where 'Ādam and Ḥawwa' عليهما السلام were created; from here they were sent down to the earth; and this is where the people of Paradise will be sent back to reside permanently.

The Present Locale of Paradise and Hell

This verse verifies that Paradise exists at the present moment, as is the belief of the overwhelming majority of the Ummah. They believe that Paradise and Hell have been created and are already in existence. This verse pointed out that the location of Paradise is on the seventh heaven under the Divine Throne. In other words, the seventh heaven is, as though, the floor of Paradise and its roof is the Divine Throne. The

location of Hell is not explicitly stated anywhere in the Qur'ān or Prophetic Traditions. Some scholars of the Qur'ān deduce from the verse [6] of Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ (and by the sea, filled up with fire,) that Hell is situated beneath the sea in the deep recesses of the earth which are presently hidden under some heavy covering. On the Day of Resurrection, it will be split asunder, and the sea will be kindled, thus turning the entire ocean into a raging and blazing fire.

Many European excavators and explorers of the current age made attempts to dig into the ground in order to build roads so as to travel around from place to place for many long years. For this task, they invented the largest and most sophisticated machinery. Various groups of scientists and experts exerted efforts in this direction. The most successful group was the one who by means of various types of machinery was able to dig six miles deep into the recesses of the earth, but beyond that they came across immovable rocks which frustrated them. They attempted to excavate in another place and dug for six miles and again came across unshakeable rocks beyond which they could not dig. In this way they experimented in many places and came to the conclusion that beyond the depth of six miles into the recesses of the earth there is a rocky covering on the entire earth at that level where no machinery can penetrate. The earth covers thousands of miles in diameter but despite advances and strides made in sciences they could have access only to the depth of six miles. Beyond that point they acknowledged the existence of impenetrable rocky covering and abandoned their attempts. This scientific experiment to excavate and explore supports the notion that the entire earth is covered with adamantine rocks, and access beyond them is not possible. If any authentic narration proves the location of Hell in this rocky covering, it should not come as a surprise. Allah knows best!

إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى (when the lote-tree was covered by that which covered it...53:16) Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim records a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ who said: "Golden butterflies were at that time falling on *sidrat-ul-muntahā* from all sides, and it seemed as if it was specially decorated for that occasion in honour of the most revered guest, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ."

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى (The eye neither went wrong, nor did exceed the limit...53:17) The verb *zāgha* is derived from the infinitive *zaigh* which

denotes to become crooked or go astray. *Ṭaghā* is derived from *ṭughyān* which means to transgress or exceed the limit. The two expressions purport to say that in whatever the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw, his eyes did not err or slip up. This verse allays the suspicion that sometimes human sight errs or slips up, especially when some wonderful or unusually marvelous thing is seen. In response to this suspicion the Qur'ān uses two expressions because there are two ways in which human sight can go awry: [1] not looking at the object directly that one was supposed to see, and turning the eye to some other side. *Mā zāgha* (neither went wrong) negates this situation. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ sight did not swerve or turn right or left, and thus did not miss the intended object. He saw exactly what was meant for him to see. [2] looking at the desired object, but at the same time looking at other objects also. In this situation too there is sometimes the fear of losing sight of the main object and causing confusion. *Mā ṭaghā* (nor did it exceed the limit) in the verse is used to remove this doubt that the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have looked at other things in addition to what he was ordained to see.

Scholars who interpret the preceding verses as referring to the vision of Jibra'īl عليه السلام explain this verse to mean that the eye of the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not err in seeing him. This had to be clarified because Jibra'īl عليه السلام is the transmitting medium. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not see him clearly and recognize him, the revelation would not be beyond doubt.

Scholars who interpreted the preceding verses as speaking of Allah's Vision interpret this verse too in the same vein that the eyes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not err or slip up in the Vision of Allah. This verse further clarifies that the Vision was with the physical eyes, not only with the eyes of the heart.

Another Approach to Interpreting the Preceding Verses: A Useful Analysis

Our venerable mentor Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Anwar Shah Kashmirī رحمه الله تعالى was a typical example of the Traditionalists who preceded him. He no doubt was a symbol of Allah and His proof on earth. His grasp of knowledge and Islamic sciences was without a doubt an exact replica of the leading authorities on the sciences of Prophetic Tradition like Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar and Dhahabī. His *Mushkilāt-ul-Qur'ān* is an invaluable treasure trove of the profoundest study of Islamic knowledge

and sciences. The noble Companions and their followers, and subsequently the scholars of Tafsīr and Ḥadīth have interpreted the verses of Sūrah An-Najm differently which gave rise to some scholarly questions. *Mushkilāt-ul-Qur'ān* interprets the verses in such a way that most of the different views have been reconciled.

Then when my another mentor Shaikh-ul-Islam Maulānā Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī رحمه الله تعالىٰ wrote his *Fatḥ-ul-Mulhim,* the commentary of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, he came across the description of the Holy Prophet's nocturnal journey of *Isrā'* and Mi'rāj with reference to the verses of Sūrah An-Najm. In view of the complexity of the problem, he requested the venerable Allāmah Anwar Shah رحمه الله تعالىٰ to write the interpretation and made it a part of his *Fatḥ-ul-Mulhim,* and adopted it in his *fawā'id-ul-Qur'ān.* In this way this research is the unanimous outcome of the two of my most distinguished teachers and mentors. Before reading on, it is necessary to keep in mind a few principal points which are recognized by almost all the scholars and leading authorities: [1] the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام twice in his original shape. The vision on both the occasions is mentioned in this chapter. We were able to determine that the second vision took place on the seventh heaven near *sidrat-ul-muntahā.* Obviously, this happened on the Night of Mi'rāj. In this way, we know the time and locale of the vision. The locale and time of the first vision cannot be determined by these verses, but they can be determined by the following narration of Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, chapter entitled: 'How the revelation started':

قال وهو يحدث عن فترة الوحی فقال فی حدیثه بینا انا امشی اذ سمعت صوتا من السمآء فرفعت بصری فاذا الملك الذی جاء نی بحراء جالس علی کرسی بین السمآء و الارض فرعبت منه فرجعت فقلت زملونی فانزل الله تعالیٰ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ قُمْ فَاَنْذِرْ (الیٰ قوله) وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ فحمی الوحی وتتابع.

Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh رضي الله عنه said, speaking of the temporary break in revelation, [the Holy Prophet] said in his narrative: "Whilst I was walking along, I heard a voice from heaven and I raised up my eyes, and lo! The Angel that had appeared to me in [the cave of] *Hira'* was sitting on a chair [suspended] between heaven and earth, and I was struck with awe on account of him and I returned and said, 'Wrap me up, Wrap me up,' then Allah sent down [74: 1-5 يٰٓأَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ، قُمْ فَاَنْذِرْ، وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ. وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ] 'O you, enveloped in a mantle, stand up and warn, and pronounce

the greatness of your Lord, and purify your clothes, and keep away from filth, "Then revelation became copious and came in succession."

This narration indicates that the first occasion on which the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape was in the course of temporary break in revelation in Makkah when he was walking along in the city of Makkah. This confirms that the first incident took place before Mi'rāj on this earth in Makkah, and the second incident took place on the seventh heaven on the Night of Mi'rāj.

Another point on which all concur is that the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm, at least from verse [13] to verse [18], all relate to the incident of Mi'rāj.

In view of the foregoing points, the venerable mentor, Maulana Sayyid Muḥammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri رحمه الله تعالى has interpreted the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm in the following way:

The Qur'ān, according to its normal style, has mentioned two incidents in the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm. One incident relates to seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape in Makkah when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was going somewhere when there was a temporary break in revelation. This incident took place before the incident of Isra' and Mi'rāj. The second incident relates to the night of Mi'rāj. Here it is mentioned that he saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape together with some of the other greatest, wonderful, marvelous and glorious signs of Allah, and the possibility cannot be ruled out that these signs included the Vision of Allah Ta'ala Himself.

The main theme of the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm is to confirm the prophethood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and to remove doubts about the authenticity of his revelation. Thus swearing an oath by the stars, Allah says that there are neither any voluntary nor involuntary errors in his instructions to the Ummah, nor does he say anything out of his own selfish desires. He only transmits to the people what he was commanded to convey, in its totality without additions or omissions. Jibra'īl عليه السلام was the transmitting agent, therefore his special characteristics and high position have been described in several verses. Another reason for giving a greater account of this Angel is probably

because the pagans of Makkah were not aware of this Angel, though they were aware of the Angels Isrāfīl and Mīka'īl. At any event, having described the imposing and majestic qualities of Jibra'īl ﷺ in full, attention is drawn to the main theme of revelation. فَاَوْحٰٓى اِلٰى عَبْدِهٖ مَآ اَوْحٰى 'So He [Allah] revealed to His servant whatever He revealed.'(verse 10). Up to this point there are ten verses, in the course of verifying the authenticity of revelation and messenger-ship, Jibra'īl's ﷺ qualities have been portrayed. If we analyze Jibra'īl's ﷺ qualities, it will be seen that they apply to the Angel directly and candidly. If we say that the qualities apply to Allah - as did some of the commentators - they can hardly apply to Him without a labored interpretation. For example, phrases like شَدِيْدُ الْقُوٰى 'one of strong faculties', ذُوْ مِرَّةٍ 'one of vigour', ثُمَّ دَنٰى فَتَدَلّٰى 'Then he drew near, and came down, فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ اَوْ اَدْنٰى so as he was at a distance between two bows, rather even nearer.' can, though,be applied to Allah, but not without labored interpretation. However, they do apply appropriately to Jibra'īl ﷺ without any far-fetched interpretation. Therefore, with regard to the initial verses - in which there is reference to 'vision', 'closeness' and 'proximity'- it seems more appropriate to refer them to the 'vision' of Jibra'īl ﷺ.

However, from verse [11] مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَاٰى 'The heart did not err in what he saw' to verse [18] لَقَدْ رَاٰى مِنْ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرٰى 'He has indeed seen a part of the biggest signs of your Lord.' describes the incidents of Isrā' and Mi'rāj. Though in this passage too the vision of Jibra'īl ﷺ is mentioned, yet it is a part of' many great signs' The possibility cannot be ruled out that the phrase'greatest Signs' includes the '*ru'yat*' (vision) of Allah' which is supported by authentic Traditions and the views of noble Companions and their followers, which cannot be overlooked or ignored. Verse [11] مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَاٰى "The heart did not err in what he saw", means that what the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw with his eyes his blessed heart confirmed that he saw correctly, with no mistakes. '*Mā kadhaba*' describes this situation and the particle '*Ma*' [whatever]is general, referring to the vision of Jibra'īl ﷺ and whatever else he saw on the Night of Mi'rāj and above all the Vision of Allah Himself. This is supported by verse [12] اَفَتُمٰرُوْنَهٗ عَلٰى مَا يَرٰى 'Do you quarrel with him in what he sees?' This verse addresses pagans of Makkah that they should not dispute or be sceptical about what he saw [in the past]or will see in the future. Everything he

saw was the veritable truth and whatever he will see in the future will be a veritable reality. This verse did not say قَدْ راٰی [...*qad ra'ā*] '...he saw' [using the past perfect tense] but rather عَلٰی مَایَرٰی [*'alā mā yara*] which may be translated as '...will see' [using the future tense] which indicates that he will see him on the Night of Mi'rāj. Thus verse [13] وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ نَزْلَةً اُخْرٰی 'And indeed he saw him another time' is explicit on the point. This verse too has two possible interpretations: [1] he saw Jibra'īl ﷺ; and [2] he saw Allah. That he saw Jibra'īl ﷺ is perfectly obvious to any scholar. But there may be a hint to the fact that he saw Allah also, because seeing requires proximity and closeness to Allah, and the verse 14 عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهٰی 'by *sidrat-ul-muntahā* (the lote-tree in the upper realm) indicates this closeness, meaning when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was near *sidrat-ul-muntahā* and had reached a high stage of nearness to Allah, he saw Him. The Tradition cited below supports the notion of the Vision of Allah:

وَاَتَيْتُ سِدْرَةَ الْمُنْتَهٰى فَغَشِيَتْنِىْ ضَبابَة خَرَرْتُ لَهَا سَاجِدًا وَهٰذِهِ الضَّبَابَةُ هِىَ الظُّلَلُ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ الَّتِىْ يَاْتِىْ فِيْهَا اللّٰهُ وَيَتَجَلّٰى.

'When I reached *sidrat-ul-muntahā*, I was overshadowed by something like the cloud and I fell prostrate for it. On the Day of Resurrection, there will be something like clouds overshadowing in which His Majestic Descent will manifest.'

Likewise, verse [53:17] مَازَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغٰى (The eye neither went wrong, nor did exceed the limit.) includes both possibilities - vision of Jibra'īl ﷺ and Vision of Allah - and it further proves that the this vision took place in the state of wakefulness with his physical eyes [that is, it was not a dream experience].

In sum, verses that relate to the Night of Mi'rāj and contain words pertaining to 'seeing' carry the equal possibility of seeing Jibra'īl ﷺ and seeing Allah Ta'ālā Himself. Other scholars too have interpreted them as the Vision of Allah. The Qur'ānic words have possibility to be interpreted in that way.

The Question of the Beatific Vision of the Creator

All Companions, their immediate followers and overwhelming majority of the Ummah concur that the inmates of Paradise and the believers in general will see Allah. Authentic Traditions bear ample testimony to this

fact and verity. They indicate that the Vision and Witnessing of Allah is not impossible. However, human sight cannot bear to see Him in this mundane world, because the capacity of the eyes is not powerful enough. Thus nobody can see Allah in this world. Regarding the Hereafter, the Qur'ān says

فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَآءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيْدٌ

"You were heedless of this. Now We have removed your veil from you; so your sight today is sharp." [50:22]

Venerable Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى says that it is not possible for any human being to see Allah in this world, because his sight is perishable, and Allah is Eternal. In the Hereafter, man will be given non-perishable sight, as a result nothing will prevent it from the seeing Allah. Venerable Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ says something similarly. A narration recorded in Muslim in the following words makes the point explicit:

وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَرَوْا رَبَّكُمْ حَتّٰى تَمُوْتُوْا

"And know that you shall never see your Lord, until you die" (Fatḥ-ul-Bārī: vol 8/p. 493)

This indicates the possibility that if the Holy Prophet ﷺ is equipped with extraordinarily powerful faculty of sight, he should be able to see Allah in this world too on a special occasion. But on the Night of Ascension he was called in the most distinguishable manner from this world to see and witness the heavens, Paradise and Hell, and other great Signs of Allah and manifestation of His power. On this occasion, the Vision of Allah is an exception to the general rule, because he is out of the mundane world. The possibility of the Vision of Allah has thus been confirmed and verified.

So far we have proved that the possibility does exist, but the question is whether it really occurred. In this matter, the Traditions vary, and the Qur'ānic verses are interpretable in two possible ways. Therefore, this question was always debatable among the Companions, their followers and leading authorities on religion. Ibn-Kathīr says that under the interpretation of these verses Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه verifies that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Allah and a group of righteous predecessors have followed him. Other groups of Companions and their followers have

differed from this viewpoint. He further adduced the evidences of both the groups.

Likewise, Ḥāfiẓ رحمه الله تعالىٰ in Fatḥ-ul-Bārī [vol 8/p.494] under the Tafsīr of Sūrah An-Najm has cited the differences of the Companions and their followers and then quoted some such statements which reconcile the divergent views. He further says that Qurṭubī in his work *mufhim* prefers to observe silence in the matter and not to decide either way, because this question does not concern our practical life so that we have to choose a particular direction. The question concerns our belief system, in which case incontestable evidence is required. In any matter which cannot be proved incontestably, the rule is to observe silence. This author believes that this is the most sound and circumspect approach to the issue. Therefore, the arguments of the two groups have not been cited. Allah, the Pure and the Exalted, knows best!

Verses 19 - 28

أَفَرَءَيْتُمُ اللّٰتَ وَالْعُزّٰى ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَنٰوةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرٰى ﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَكُمُ
الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنْثٰى ﴿٢١﴾ تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزٰى ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّآ
أَسْمَآءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَآ أَنْتُمْ وَاٰبَآؤُكُمْ مَّآ أَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ط إِنْ
يَّتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ ج وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمُ
الْهُدٰى ﴿٢٣﴾ أَمْ لِلْإِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَنّٰى ﴿٢٤﴾ فَلِلّٰهِ الْاٰخِرَةُ وَالْأُولٰى
﴿٢٥﴾ وَكَمْ مِّنْ مَّلَكٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْـًٔا إِلَّا مِنْۢ
بَعْدِ أَنْ يَّأْذَنَ اللّٰهُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَرْضٰى ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ لَيُسَمُّونَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْأُنْثٰى ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهٖ مِنْ
عِلْمٍ ط إِنْ يَّتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ ج وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٢٨﴾

Have you ever considered about the (idols of) *Lāt* and *'Uzzā*, [19] and about the other, the third, the *Manāt*,? [20] Is it that you have males and He (Allah) has females? [21] If so, it is a totally unjust division. [22] These are nothing but names you and your fathers have

invented; Allah has sent down no authority attached to them. They are following nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire, while guidance from their Lord has surely reached them. [23] **Is it that man gets whatever he wishes?** [24] **(No,) because to Allah alone belongs the (good of) the Hereafter and the former life (of this world).** [25] **And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession cannot benefit (any one) at all, but after Allah allows (it) for whomsoever He wills and pleases.** [26] **Those who do not believe in the Hereafter name the angels after the names of the females.** [27] **And they do not have knowledge about it. They follow nothing but conjecture, and conjecture is of no use in (the matter of) Truth.** [28]

Refuting Idolatry

The preceding verses declared the Glory of Allah, His Majesty and Dignity. They further confirmed and verified in the fullest details the Prophet-hood and messenger-ship of Muḥammad ﷺ, and the preservation of his revelation. The present two verses imply a subtle rebuke to the Makkan pagans. The purport of the verses is to say to them that without any proof, instead of adoring such a Mighty and Powerful Creator and Lord, they stoop so low as to worship gods made of wood and stone. They allege that the angels are the daughters of God. According to other narratives, they also alleged that these idols are the daughters of God.

Pagans of Arabia had countless idols that they worshipped. However, there were three of them that were most popular, and they were worshipped by strong and powerful tribes of Arabia. The three idols were Lāt, 'Uzzā and Manāt. Lāt was the idol of the tribe of Thaqīf or of the residents of Ṭā'if , 'Uzzā was the idol of Quraish, and Manāt was the idol of Banū Hilāl. They built houses for their idols to resemble the Ka'bah. After the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ demolished them. (Qurṭubī)

قِسۡمَةٌ ضِيۡزٰی (If so, it is a totally unjust division.... 53:22)" *Ḍīzā* means to act or behave unjustly or to defraud one of one's right or due. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه interprets the phrase as unjust or unfair division.

Various Types of Ẓann

اِنۡ يَّتَّبِعُوۡنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ ۚ وَاِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغۡنِىۡ مِنَ الۡحَقِّ شَيۡـئًا (and conjecture is of no use in [the

matter of] Truth.... 53:28) The Arabic word *Ẓann* is used in several different senses, and one of them is baseless thoughts. This is the sense in which it is employed in the verse, because baseless thoughts were the cause of idolatry. And the verse purports to remove the cause. *Ẓann* is also used as the antonym of *yaqīn*. *Yaqīn* refers to assured or definitive knowledge about something that really exists, not the figment of someone's imagination. In this case, there is no room for any doubt or suspicion, as for instance knowledge gained from the Qur'ān and Prophetic Traditions uninterruptedly reported by an indefinite number of people or by such a large number that it is impossible that they should agree upon falsehood. As opposed to this certain knowledge, *ẓann* is sometime used for the knowledge that is based on a proof, and not on baseless thoughts, but the proof is not so certain as may rule out other possibilities, as for example, injunctions based on general narratives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The first type of injunctions is referred to as *qaṭ'iyyāt* or *yaqīniyyāt* and the second type is referred to as *ẓanniyyāt*. This type of *Ẓann* is recognized by Sharī'ah. There is ample evidence in Qur'ān and Sunnah of its recognition. The entire Ummah concurs that it is obligatory to act upon it. The above verse when denouncing *ẓann*, refers to the first type of *ẓann* which connotes baseless thoughts. Thus there is no contradiction.

Verses 29 - 32

فَاَعْرِضْ عَنْ مَّنْ تَوَلّٰى ۙ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ اِلَّا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٢٩﴾ ط
ذٰلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ ط اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ
وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اهْتَدٰى ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ
ۙ لِيَجْزِىَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسَآءُوْا بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَيَجْزِىَ الَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا
بِالْحُسْنٰى ﴿٣١﴾ ج اَلَّذِيْنَ يَجْتَنِبُوْنَ كَبٰٓئِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ اِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ط
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ط هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ اِذْ اَنْشَاَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ وَاِذْ
اَنْتُمْ اَجِنَّةٌ فِىْ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ ج فَلَا تُزَكُّوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ط هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ
اتَّقٰى ﴿٣٢﴾ ع

So, turn away from him who turns away from Our advice, and seeks nothing but (pleasure of) the worldly life. [29] **That is the limit of their excess in knowledge. Indeed only your Lord knows well about the one who has gone astray from his way, and He knows well about the one who has adopted the right path.** [30] **And to Allah belongs whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the earth, so that He gives punishment to evil-doers for what they did and rewards those who did good for their good deed,** [31] **those who abstain from the major sins and from shameful acts, except minor involvements. Indeed your Lord is One of extensive forgiveness. He knows you more than anyone else (from a time) when He created you from the earth and when you were embryos in the wombs of your mothers. So, do not claim purity (from faults) for your selves. He knows best who is God-fearing.** [32]

Necessity of turning away from the Misguided People

فَاَعْرِضْ عَنْ مَّنْ تَوَلّٰی ۙ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ اِلَّا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا. ذٰلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ (So, turn away from him who turns away from Our advice, and seeks nothing but (pleasure of) the worldly life.... 53:29-30)

A Special Warning

The Qur'ān here describes the condition of those unbelievers who denied the Hereafter and the Day of Judgement. Regretfully, nowadays the Muslims have characterized themselves by the same condition as a result of Western education and material needs and desires. All our attempts to make progress in the fields of various branches of knowledge, sciences and arts pivot on, or revolve around, economics. They do not think even by mistake about *ma'ādiyyāt* (matters relating to the Life Hereinafter). We believe in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and hope for his intercession. But Allah commands the Holy Prophet ﷺ to withdraw from the people of misguidance and shun them. We seek refuge in Allah from such misguidance!

Allah Forgives the Small Faults, *Al-Lamam*

اَلَّذِيْنَ يَجْتَنِبُوْنَ كَبٰٓئِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ اِلَّا اللَّمَمَ (those who abstain from the major sins and from shameful acts, except minor involvements....53:32) The preceding verse praises those who follow the right guidance of Allah and do good deeds. In the present verse, it is stated that the good-doers are those who avoid major sins and, especially immoral sins and shameful

deeds. There is one exception made by the expression *lamam* [which will be elaborated upon later].It means that they sometimes do commit minor sins [*lamam*] but that does not exclude them from the category of being *muhsinīn* [good-doers].

The Companions and their followers interpret the word لَمَم *lamam* in two different ways:

[1] Some commentators are of the view that it refers to small faults and minor errors which in Sūrah An-Nisā' has been described as *sayyi'at:* إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوْا كَبَآئِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّاٰتِكُمْ "(f you abstain from the major (sins) out of what you have been forbidden from We shall write off your minor sins - 4:31". Ibn-Kathīr has reported this from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and Abū Hurairah ﷺ;

[2] Some other scholars have held that *lamam* means, a sin that a person commits incidentally and then repents. After repentance, he never repeats it. Ibn Kathīr has reported a narration from Ibn Jarīr, first through Sayyidnā Mujāhid, and again through Sayyidnā 'Aṭā', from Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, and through Hasan Basri from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ. The gist of that narration too is that even if a person were to commit a major sin incidentally and repents, he will not be excluded from the ranks of the God-fearing people. Verse [135] of Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān:

وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَا فَعَلُوْا فَاحِشَةً اَوْظَلَمُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللّٰهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوْبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَّغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوْا عَلٰى مَافَعَلُوْا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

> And those who, when they happen to commit a shameful act or wrong themselves, remember Allah, then, seek forgiveness for their sins - and who is there to forgive sins except Allah? - and do not persist in what they have done, knowingly. [3:135]

It should be noted that overwhelming majority of scholars concur that if a person persists in a minor sin and continues to do it in a determined way so that it becomes a habit, it will no longer be a minor sin, but will turn into a major sin. Therefore, Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī has explained the word *lamam* as those small sins in which the doer does not persist.

Definition of Major and Minor Sins

This subject is taken up in full detail in Sūrah An-Nisā' in this book Vol. 2/pp404-410, under verse [31] إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوْا كَبَآئِرَ مَاتُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ "If you abstain

from major [sins] out of what you have been forbidden from, We shall write off your minor sins..." , [q.v.].

هُوَاَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ اِذْ اَنْشَاَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ وَاِذْ اَنْتُمْ اَجِنَّةٌ فِیْ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ (He knows you more than anyone else [from a time] when He created you from the earth and when you were embryos in the wombs of your mothers...53:32) The word *ajinnatun* is the plural of *janīn* which means embryo or foetus. This verse purports to say that man does not have knowledge of himself as much as Allah knows him. When he went through the various phases of his creation in his mother's womb, he did not have any knowledge or sense. But his Creator knows fully well how wisely He was creating him. Thus he is made aware of his inability and lack of sufficient knowledge. Having said this, he is further made aware of the fact that any good he does is not his personal accomplishment. The ultimate source of his achievement is Allah: It is Allah who has given him limbs, organs and other parts of the body to perform the righteous deeds; it is He who has equipped him with the ability to move his limbs; then He has created the urge, will and determination to perform righteous actions. Hence, not even the greatest righteous, pious and God-fearing person has the right to pride upon his works and behave arrogantly. Besides, no one yet knows what the end result of his activities will be. Yet the end result is the most important factor in our life. Therefore, pride and arrogance is meaningless.

The concluding part of the verse puts it thus:

فَلَا تُزَكُّوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ط هُوَاَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقٰى

So, do not claim purity [from faults] for your selves. He knows best who is God-fearing... (53:32).

In other words, the merit of a person lies not only in his outer actions, but in *taqwā* in one's heart and in his inner moral excellence and uprightness which endures till his death. Only Allah knows who is perfect in this quality.

Sayyidah Zainab bint Abī Salamah رضی اللہ عنہا was named by her parents as *Barrah* which means 'righteous or upright'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the concluding part of this verse فَلَا تُزَكُّوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ (Do not claim purity for your selves.) and suggested the name be changed. Therefore, they changed her name to 'Zainab'. Imām Aḥmad records on the authority of 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakrah رضی اللہ عنہ that a person praised

another person in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He stopped him and said "If you have to praise a person, then say, 'according to my knowledge the person appears to be upright and God-fearing وَلَا اُزَكِّیْ عَلَی اللّٰہِ اَحَدًا and I cannot say that he is so in the sight of Allah as well'.

Verses 33 - 62

اَفَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِىْ تَوَلّٰى ﴿٣٣﴾ وَاَعْطٰى قَلِيْلًا وَّاَكْدٰى ﴿٣٤﴾ اَعِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ
الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرٰى ﴿٣٥﴾ اَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّاْ بِمَا فِىْ صُحُفِ مُوْسٰى ﴿٣٦﴾
وَاِبْرٰهِيْمَ الَّذِىْ وَفّٰٓى ﴿٣٧﴾ اَلَّا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ﴿٣٨﴾ وَاَنْ لَّيْسَ
لِلْاِنْسَانِ اِلَّا مَا سَعٰى ﴿٣٩﴾ وَاَنَّ سَعْيَهٗ سَوْفَ يُرٰى ﴿٤٠﴾ ثُمَّ يُجْزٰىهُ
الْجَزَآءَ الْاَوْفٰى ﴿٤١﴾ وَاَنَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهٰى ﴿٤٢﴾ وَاَنَّهٗ هُوَ
اَضْحَكَ وَاَبْكٰى ﴿٤٣﴾ وَاَنَّهٗ هُوَ اَمَاتَ وَاَحْيَا ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاَنَّهٗ خَلَقَ
الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْاُنْثٰى ﴿٤٥﴾ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ اِذَا تُمْنٰى ﴿٤٦﴾ وَاَنَّ عَلَيْهِ
النَّشْاَةَ الْاُخْرٰى ﴿٤٨﴾ وَاَنَّهٗ هُوَ اَغْنٰى وَاَقْنٰى وَاَنَّهٗ هُوَ رَبُّ الشِّعْرٰى
﴿٤٩﴾ وَاَنَّهٗ اَهْلَكَ عَادَا ِۨ الْاُوْلٰى ﴿٥٠﴾ وَثَمُوْدَا فَمَآ اَبْقٰى ﴿٥١﴾ وَقَوْمَ
نُوْحٍ مِّنْ قَبْلُ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا هُمْ اَظْلَمَ وَاَطْغٰى ﴿٥٢﴾ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ
اَهْوٰى ﴿٥٣﴾ فَغَشّٰىهَا مَا غَشّٰى ﴿٥٤﴾ فَبِاَىِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارٰى ﴿٥٥﴾
هٰذَا نَذِيْرٌ مِّنَ النُّذُرِ الْاُوْلٰى ﴿٥٦﴾ اَزِفَتِ الْاٰزِفَةُ ﴿٥٧﴾ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ
دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ كَاشِفَةٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ اَفَمِنْ هٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ تَعْجَبُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾
وَتَضْحَكُوْنَ وَلَا تَبْكُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَاَنْتُمْ سٰمِدُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ فَاسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ
وَاعْبُدُوْا ﴿٦٢﴾ سجدہ

Did you see the one who turned away, [33] **and gave a little, and stopped?** [34] **Does he have knowledge of the Unseen whereby he sees (what he believes)?** [35] **Has he not been told of what was (revealed) in the scriptures of Mūsā** [36] **and of Ibrāhīm who fulfilled (his covenant)?**

[37] (It was) that no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of the other, [38] and that a man does not deserve but (the reward of) his own effort, [39] and that his effort will soon be seen, [40] then he will be recompensed for it in full, [41] and that to your Lord is the end (of every one), [42] and that He is the One who makes (one) laugh and makes (him) weep, [43] and that He is the One who gives death and gives life, [44] and that He creates the pairs, male and female, [45] from a sperm-drop when it is poured (into a womb), [46] and that the second creation is undertaken by Him, [47] and that He is the One who gives wealth and preserves (it), [48] and that He is the One who is the Lord of Sirius (the star worshipped by pagans), [49] and that He has destroyed the earlier 'Ād, [49] and Thamūd, so spared none, [51] and (destroyed) the people of Nūḥ even before. Surely they were more unjust and more rebellious. [52] And He destroyed the overturned towns (of the people of Lūṭ) also, [53] so covered they were by that which covered. [54] Then, concerning which of your Lord's bounties would you remain in doubt? [55] This (Holy Prophet) is a warner from the (genus of the) previous warners. [56] The Imminent (Hour) has approached. [57] There is no one, beside Allah, to remove it. [58] Do you then wonder at this discourse, [59] and laugh (at it), and not weep, [60] while you are engaged in vain play? [61] Now, fall down in prostration and worship (Allah). [62]

Background of Revelation

Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr reports from Ibn Jarir that a person embraced Islam and one of his friends rebuked him for having abandoned his forefather's religion. He responded that he fears Allah's chastisement. The friend told him to make a certain payment to him, and he will take upon himself his punishment of the Hereafter. Thus he [the new Muslim] will be spared from the chastisement, and consequently he made the payment to him. The friend demanded more payment. After a scuffle, he made the additional payment to him, and for the balance a document was drawn up with signatures of witnesses. That person, according to Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, was Walīd Ibn Mughīrah who was inclined towards Islam. But his friend reproached him and took the responsibility of punishment upon his own shoulders.

أَفَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِى تَوَلَّى (Did you see the one who turned away,... 53:33) The

word *tawalla* literally means 'to turn the face away', and it connotes in this context a person who turns away from Allah's obedience.

وَاَعۡطٰى قَلِيۡلًا وَّاَكۡدٰى (and gave a little, and stopped? ...53:34) The word *akda* is derived from *kudyah* which refers to a hard or stony piece of ground or clod that appears in the course of digging a well or a trench. As a result, the digger cannot dig any further. Thus the meaning of the verse is that at first he gave a little, then he stopped giving. In view of the incident narrated under the heading of "Background of Revelation", the meaning is quite clear. [For the person in that incident paid a little amount and then stopped payment.] Apart from this meaning, Sayyidnā Mujāhid, Saʻīd Ibn Jubair, ʻIkrimah, Qatādah and others interpret this word to imply that a person spent a little in Allah's way, then stopped it; or at first he was somewhat inclined towards Allah's obedience, and he obeyed Him for a while, and then gave it up [vide Ibn Kathīr].

اَعِنۡدَهٗ عِلۡمُ الۡغَيۡبِ فَهُوَ يَرٰى (Does he have knowledge of the Unseen whereby he sees [what he believes]?...53:35) According to the story recounted in connection with the occasion of revelation, the verse means: The person who embraced Islam and later abandoned it because his friend assured him that he would bear the punishment in the Hereafter on his behalf, and spare him the pain. The fool believed him and took for granted the assurance given to him. Does he have the knowledge of the Unseen, so that he is able to see that the chastisement he deserves for disbelief will be taken over for sure by his friend? This is wholly a make-believe situation. He neither has the knowledge of the Unseen, nor can he take on the punishment of somebody else and save him. Apart from the story recounted in connection with the occasion of revelation, the verse would mean: Does this person, who stopped giving for fear of poverty and ended his acts of charity have knowledge of the Unseen and thus knows that if he does not stop spending, his wealth will go away? No. This is absolutely false. Such a person has neither the knowledge of the Unseen so that he is able to see that if he goes on spending, his wealth will be depleted and not replenished. He stopped spending in charity for righteous causes, and did not keep relations with kith and kin because of his miserliness, being stingy and out of fear of poverty. The Qur'ān makes plain in [34:39]

مَآ اَنۡفَقۡتُمۡ مِّنۡ شَىۡءٍ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهٗ‌ۚ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ الرّٰزِقِيۡنَ

And whatever thing you spend, He replaces it. And He is the best of the sustainers. [34:39]

If man thinks carefully, this verse does not only concern wealth and money, but it also concerns every power, strength and energy of our body. When we expend it and it gets depleted, Allah replaces it and has arranged for its replenishment. Imagine even if our limbs, organs and other body parts were made of steel and worked constantly for 60-70 years, they would have diminished long ago. However, as they diminish, Allah replenishes them inwardly as though by means of an automatic machine. Likewise, man keeps spending and it is constantly replenished.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

اَنْفِقْ يَا بِلَالُ وَلَا تَخْشَ مِنْ ذِی الْعَرْشِ اِقْلَالًا

"O Bilāl, spend and do not fear that the Lord of the Throne will render you indigent." (Ibn Kathīr)

اَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّاْ بِمَا فِىْ صُحُفِ مُوْسٰى. وَاِبْرٰهِيْمَ الَّذِىْ وَفّٰٓى (Has he not been told of what was [revealed] in the scriptures of Mūsā and of Ibrāhīm who fulfilled [his covenant]?... 53:37- 38) In verse [37], the Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has been described by the expression *waffā* which is derived from the root word *wafā'* and it means to fulfill faithfully the covenant one has made with someone.

Special Characteristic of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام: fulfillment of Covenant

Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had a covenant with Allah that he will obey Him and convey His Message to all the people. He fulfilled faithfully the covenant: He obeyed Allah and delivered His Message to His creatures. As a result, he was made to pass through severe trials and tribulations. This is the interpretation placed upon the expression *waffā* (fulfilled) by Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr and others.

Several narratives describe particular works of Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام as a purport of the expression *waffā*, but the two versions are not contradictory, because fufillment of covenant is general. It comprehends acting upon all the Divine injunctions, obeying Allah in all actions, fulfilling the duties of Prophet-hood and messenger-ship and reforming the creation of Allah.

Let us consider the narrative which Ibn Abī Ḥātim has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū 'Umāmah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verse 37, and asked: Do you know what is the meaning of

waffā (fulfilled)? Sayyidnā Abū 'Umāmah ﷺ replied: Allah and His Rasūl know best. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

وَفّٰى عَمَلَ يَوْمِهٖ بِاَرْبَعِ رَكْعَاتٍ فِیْ اَوَّلِ النَّهَارِ. (ابن كثير)

"He fulfilled the day's work by starting it with the performance of four *rak'at* [that is, *ṣalāt-ul-ishrāq*]."

This is supported by the Tradition recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr ﷺ, according to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

اِبْنَ اٰدَمَ ارْكَعْ لِیْ اَرْبَعَ رَكْعَاتٍ مِّنْ اَوَّلِ النَّهَارِ اَكْفِكَ اٰخِرَهٗ (ابن كثير)

"O Son of 'Ādam! Perform four *rak'āt* of prayer in the early part of the day, I shall take of you in all your affairs till the end of the day."

Ibn Abī Ḥātim reports another Tradition from Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Anas ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Do you know why Allah gave Ibrāhīm ﷺ the title of *al-ladhi waffā* (the one who fulfilled)? Then, he said, 'Because he used to recite the following *dhikr* every morning and evening:

فَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ حِیْنَ تُمْسُوْنَ وَحِیْنَ تُصْبِحُوْنَ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
وَعَشِیًّا وَّحِیْنَ تُظْهِرُوْنَ. (ابن كثير)

Scriptures of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm ﷺ: Special Guidance and Teachings

Whenever any command, statement, action or teaching of Allah is quoted in the Qur'ān from the scriptures of the former Prophets ﷺ, it means that it is obligatory for this 'Ummah to act upon it, unless there is an explicit text abrogating the previous teachings. Forthcoming eighteen verses elaborate on the special teachings of the scriptures of Holy Prophets Mūsā and Ibrāhīm علیهما السلام. Of them only two of the previous teachings are concerned with practical life. The rest are meant to advise, warn and draw attention to the Signs of Allah. The two verses [38] and [39] concerned with prescriptive teachings are as follows:

None shall carry the Burden of Any Other on the Day of Resurrection

اَلَّا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ﴿۳۸﴾ وَاَنْ لَّیْسَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ اِلَّا مَا سَعٰى ﴿۳۹﴾

(It was) that no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of the

other, [38] and that a man shall not deserve but (the reward of) his own effort, [39]

The word *wizr* originally means a burden, and the verse purports to say that every man shall have to carry his own wrongdoings, whether disbelief or sin, and none else shall carry his burden of sin, as Allah states in [35:18].

وَإِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ حِمْلِهَا لَا يُحْمَلْ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ

And if a person carrying a heavy load calls (someone) to (share) his load, nothing from it shall be carried (by the latter), even though he be a near of kin. .... [18]

By load or burden is meant the load or burden of sin and its punishment, signifying that on the Day of Resurrection the punishment of one will not be given to another, nor will anyone have the choice to pay for another's sin as the verse quoted above clearly indicates.

This verse also refutes the thinking of the person which was narrated above as Background of Revelation: He had become a Muslim or was going to become one, and his friend rebuked him, saying that if any punishment is meted out to him, he guarantees him that no harm will come to him. The friend assured him that he would bear the burden of his punishment, and save him. This verse further clarifies that in matters, such as these, there is no possibility that one person may commit the sin and another is held accountable to pay the price.

As for the Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Umar ﷺ, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥain, that the dead are punished because of the weeping and wailing of their families on his death, it relates to the person who himself used to weep and wail for the deceased and was wont to it, or who had advised his heirs to weep and wail for him after his death. (Maẓharī). In this case he is punished for his own deed, not on account of other people's deed.[1]

The second injunction is contained in verse [39] وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ

(1). It should be noted here that if one weeps on the death of a person in a way that he or she cannot control his or her emotions, it is not a sin in Shari'ah. The wailing that has been prohibited is a particular type of wailing that was customary in Pre-Islam Arab society, and is still in vogue in some areas, in which one would cry loudly, often in an artificial manner, and would invite others to weep, slapping his face, tearing his clothes and complaining of the destiny.It is this type of formal wailing that is meant here by the esteemed author. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

(and that a man does not deserve but [the reward of] his own effort,....53:39) The summary of this verse is that just as no person shall carry the burden of sin of any other, so shall he benefit only from the good that he himself has done. It is not the case that a person performs a righteous act instead of someone else, and the latter is absolved of his responsibility. For example, if a person performs the obligatory prayers and fasts on behalf of somebody else, the latter will not be absolved of his religious duties and obligations. He is still liable for them. Likewise, if a person embraces faith on behalf of somebody else, the latter cannot be regarded as a believer.

Thus interpreted, no juristic problems arise in connection with this verse. However, some superficial questions do arise regarding Hajj and *Zakāh*. In times of necessity Sharī'ah permits to perform Ḥajj on behalf of somebody else, or pay Zakāh on his behalf with his permission. How is this possible? A careful analysis of the two situations does not pose any problem: In the case of *Ḥajj-e-Badal*, the sender of a person to perform this type of pilgrimage bears the expenses himself,[2] and thus it is his [the sender's] own act for which he will be rewarded. In the case of *Zakāh*, appointing someone to pay is also the act of the person who made the appointment, and not that of the appointee. Therefore, the two cases are not in conflict with verse [39].

Offering Reward of Good Deeds to others

In the foregoing section we have explained that verse [39] means that no person can perform an obligatory act, such as faith, prayers and fasts, on behalf of some other person to free him of his religious duties. He will be able to benefit only from the good he himself has done. This, however, does not imply that a person cannot perform supererogatory acts and proffer their reward to someone else. There is ample textual evidence of Shári'ah that a person can supplicate or give charity or do any other good deed and proffer its reward to others. Further, there is an overwhelming consensus of the Ummah on this issue. (Ibn Kathīr)

However, only Imām Shāfi'ī رحمه الله تعالىٰ differs on this issue. He says that the reward of recitation of the Qur'ān cannot be proffered to anyone

(2). It should be kept in mind that this is allowed only when one is unable to perform Hajj due to a physical constraint, and therefore his obligation becomes limited to sending someone else with his own expense. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

else. He takes the above verse in a general sense and argues that the rewards of the purely bodily acts of worship, such as the prayer, fasting and recitation of the Qur'ān and so on, cannot be passed on to any other person. According to Imām Abū Hanifah رحمه الله تعالى and majority of the leading jurists, it is permissible. They argue that just as it is possible to pray for and proffer the reward of charity to another person, so likewise it is possible to recite the Qur'ān and perform other voluntary prayers to pass the reward to another person who will receive it. Qurṭubī says, in his Tafsīr, a large number of Traditions bear testimony to the fact that a believer will receive the reward of the righteous acts of another person. Tafsīr Maẓharī has, on this occasion, collected all the relevant Traditions which prove that another person does receive the benefit of *'Iṣāl-e-Thawāb* (proffering the reward of good acts).

The foregoing verses have elaborated on two issues with reference to the scriptures of Prophets Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام: [1] No one will bear the burden of another's sin and punishment; and [2] No one shall be freed of his Shar'ī obligations, unless he himself performs them. These two rules of law were available in the Sharī'ah of all the Prophets. However, they are especially mentioned in relation to Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام probably because in their days an evil custom had taken deep root that the son used to be killed instead of the father; and father, brother, sister or some other member of the family used to be killed instead of the son. The Sharī'ah of these prophets abolished all the evil customs of the dark age.

وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرٰى (and that his effort will soon be seen...53:40) In other words, outer actions of a person are not sufficient. Allah will take into account the real, inner motive and driving force behind them whether they were performed with the sincerity of purpose, or they were done with some ulterior motive. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

"Actions shall be judged only by the intentions."

That is, the outer aspect of actions is not sufficient. The inner aspect is also necessary. Actions must be performed purely for the good pleasure of Allah and in compliance with His command.

وَاَنَّ اِلٰی رَبِّکَ الْمُنْتَهٰی (and that to your Lord is the end [of every one],... 53:42) This means that ultimately every one will return to Allah on the Day of Resurrection, and give an account of his actions.

Some of the commentators interpret that this statement purports to say that the access of human thought and imagination ends with Allah. The reality of His Being and attributes cannot be discovered by human imagination, because they are beyond conceptualization. Thus we are clearly prohibited from deliberating (See Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol.2/pp 277-280 [Tr.]) in His Being and His Attributes. There are narrations that tell us to ponder over the manifestation of His Attributes and bounties, and not to conceptualize His Being and His Attributes or Qualities, the reality of which should be left to the Divine Knowledge only.

وَاَنَّهٗ هُوَ اَضْحَکَ وَاَبْکٰی (and that He is the One who makes [one] laugh and makes [him] weep,...53:43) Mankind experiences happiness and grief, and consequently laughing and weeping. Man assigns this to the secondary causes [which refer to every existent thing in this universe, and that is where he ends the matter. If we analyze carefully and profoundly, the whole system of cause and effect ends with Allah, the Primary and Supreme Cause. No secondary cause makes anyone happy or sad, nor does it make him to laugh or weep. Both of these things are created by Allah. He created the series of secondary causes and effects in our finite world. But as the Primary and Supreme Cause, He can at any moment make the laughing person weep, and make the weeping person laugh. How well it has been versified!

بگوشِ گل چہ سخن گفتۂ کہ خندان ست...... بعندلیب چہ فرمودۂ کہ نالان ست

What have You whispered to the ear of a flower (O Allah) whereby it is smiling?

And what have You said to the nightingale whereby it is weeping all the times?

وَاَنَّهٗ هُوَ اَغْنٰی وَاَقْنٰی (and that He is the One who gives wealth and preserves [it]...53:48) The word *ghinā* means affluence, and *ighnā'* means to give wealth to somebody else, and enrich him. The word *aqnā* is derived from *qinyatun* which means preserving and reserve wealth. The meaning of the verse is that it is Allah Who enriches His servants and grants wealth to them to their satisfaction, so that they are able to use some and keep

some in their reserve fund for future use.

وَاَنَّهٗ هُوَرَبُّ الشِّعْرٰى (and that He is the One who is the Lord of Sirius ...53:49) The word *shi'rā* with the diacritical symbol *kasrah* under the letter *shīn* is the name of a star, called Sirius which is behind Jauzā'. Some of the Arab tribes worshipped the mighty star, Sirius, because they regarded it as a source of good or bad luck for them. Allah mentions this star in particular in order to refute their false notion and to affirm that He is the Lord and Master of this star as well, although He is the Creator, Master and Lord of all the stars, heavens and the earth.

وَاَنَّهٗ اَهْلَكَ عَادًا الْاُوْلٰى وَثَمُوْدَا فَمَا اَبْقٰى (and that He has destroyed the earlier 'Ād, and Thamūd, so spared none,...53:50-51) The people of 'Ād were among the strongest, fiercest people and the most rebellious against Allah. There are two branches of this people: one of them is known as *'ūlā* [the first] and *'ukhrā* [the latter or the second]. Holy Prophet Hūd عليه السلام was sent to 'Ād, but they disobeyed him, as a result Allah annihilated the entire nation by a violently furious wind. This is the first nation that was destroyed in punishment after the destruction of the people of Holy Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام. (Maẓharī) Holy Prophet Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام was sent to the tribe of Thamūd, being the second 'Ād, but they too disobeyed their Prophet. Those who transgressed were caught by the awesome Cry of Jibra'īl عليه السلام and their hearts were burst by the horrific sound resulting in the mass destruction of those people. (See Ma'āriful Qur'ān Vol. 4/p. 651 and the cross-reference given there. [Tr.])

وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ اَهْوٰى (And He destroyed the overturned towns also,... 53:53) The word *Mu'tafikah* literally means *mu'talifah* (joined together). These were a few settlements adjacent to the city. Holy Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام was sent to them. Because of disobedience and commission of shameful and unspeakable sins, their cities [of Sodom and Gomorrah] were turned upside down by Jibra'īl عليه السلام.

فَغَشّٰهَا مَاغَشّٰى (so covered they were by that which covered.... 53:54). This refers to the fact that the cities were first overturned, and after that stones of hard clay were sent down on them, which covered them.

Here ends the teachings of the scriptures of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام.

فَبِاَيِّ الْآءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارٰى (Then, which of your Lord's bounties would you dispute?....53:55). *Tamārā* means to dispute and oppose. According to Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, the verse is addressed to every human being. After seeing so many and so clear and invincible arguments in the preceding verses and the Signs in the scriptures of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام that support and substantiate the claims of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ about the truth of his revelation, the verse says to the obstinate disbelievers: How long will you continue to deny the truth and wander in the wilderness of disbelief? The verse further makes it abundantly clear for those who think and deliberate that there should be no room for any doubt in the Messenger of Allah, his revelation and his teachings. Having heard about the stories of destruction and punishment of past nations, this is an opportune occasion for them to straighten out. This well-timed occasion is a favour of Allah. They should take advantage of it instead of fighting and opposing it.

هٰذَا نَذِيْرٌ مِّنَ النُّذُرِ الْاُوْلٰى (This [Holy Prophet] is a warner from the (genus of the) previous warners...53:56). *Hādha* is a demonstrative pronoun and points either to the Holy Prophet ﷺ or to the Qur'ān. With reference to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it means that in the past, many Prophets were sent to their respective nations, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ is sent to all mankind, and he is not a new thing among the Messengers. He is well-established in the straight path. With reference to the Qur'ān, it means that he has come with a book of guidance which, if complied with, assures them of success in this world and in the Hereafter. The opponents should fear the Divine punishment.

اَزِفَتِ الْاٰزِفَةُ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ كَاشِفَةٌ (The Imminent (Hour) has approached. [53:57] There is no one, beside Allah, to remove it...53:58). The verb *'azifa* is used in the sense of *qaruba* which means to draw near. *Āzifah* is the feminine active participle from the verb *azifa* and it refers to the Imminent Event. In other words, the Imminent Event has drawn near, referring to the Day of Resurrection. No one besides Allah can prevent it from happening , nor does anyone know when it will happen, except Him. The imminence of Resurrection is in relation to the age of the entire world. The Ummah of Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is right at the end of it near the Day of Judgement.

اَفَمِنْ هٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ تَعْجَبُوْنَ وَتَضْحَكُوْنَ وَلَا تَبْكُوْنَ (Do you then wonder at this

discourse, and laugh [at it], and not weep....53:59-60). The phrase 'this discourse' refers to the Qur'ān. That is, the Qur'ān, the Divine Discourse, which is itself a miracle, has already come to them. They are surprised at it and laugh in jest and mock at it, and do not weep at their sins and shortcomings.

وَأَنْتُمْ سٰمِدُوْنَ (while you are engaged in vain play? ....53:61). *Sāmidūn* is the plural of "*sāmid*" from the root word *sumud* which literally denotes to be heedless. *Sāmidūn* is used in the sense of *ghafilun,* meaning unmindful. Some of the Imāms have interpreted the word *sumud* to mean to sing. That meaning can equally fit or apply in this context.

فَاسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَاعْبُدُوْا (Now, fall down in prostration and worship [Allah]...53:62). It means that preceding verses have a lesson for everyone who considers them seriously that he should worship Allah and bow down before him in humbleness.

It is recorded in Bukhārī on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse he prostrated, and all those around him also prostrated along with him-Muslims, pagans, Jinns and mankind. Another report from 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, as recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim, narrates that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ finished reciting the Sūrah before a mixed gathering of Muslims and disbelievers, and, along with his followers, he prostrated himself on the ground, the disbelievers too prostrated, except one old Quraishi man who took a handful of soil and, having applied it on his forehead said, 'This is enough for me.' 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ said that he saw this man later on killed as a disbeliever. Following the example of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the Muslims were expected to prostrate. As far as the idolaters are concerned, having been profoundly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion and being overawed by the august recitation of the Qur'ānic words, as well as by the Divine Majesty and Glory, might also have fallen in prostration. However, since this prostration was performed in the state of disbelief, it did not carry any reward, but it did leave a deep impression on them; and as a result of this impact, they all later on embraced the Islamic faith, except one person who died in the state of *kufr*, because he arrogantly refrained from performing the *sajdah*.

Ṣaḥīḥain record a report from Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Thābit ﷺ to the

effect that he recited the entire Sūrah An-Najm in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but he [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] did not perform the *sajdah*. It does not necessarily follow from this that the *sajdah* is not obligatory or compulsory. It is possible that at that particular moment, he did not have his ablution or there must have been some other legitimate reason for not performing the *sajdah*. In such situations, it is not obligatory to perform the *sajdah* forthwith. It can be delayed until the reason has ceased. And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Sūrah An-Najm, through the help and grace of Allah, the Pure, the exalted, ended on Friday night 1st Rabi'-uth-Thānī 1391, in one week. Allah willing, this chapter will be followed by Sūrah Al-Qamar. Allah grants success!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Najm
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qamar

(The Moon)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 55 verses and 3 sections

بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ ﴿١﴾ وَاِنْ يَّرَوْا اٰيَةً يُّعْرِضُوْا وَيَقُوْلُوْا
سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ ﴿٢﴾ وَكَذَّبُوْا وَاتَّبَعُوْٓا اَهْوَآءَهُمْ وَكُلُّ اَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣﴾
وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ مِّنَ الْاَنْۢبَآءِ مَا فِيْهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ ﴿٤﴾ حِكْمَةٌ ۢ بَالِغَةٌ فَمَا تُغْنِ
النُّذُرُ ﴿٥﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ اِلٰى شَيْءٍ نُّكُرٍ ﴿٦﴾ خُشَّعًا
اَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُوْنَ مِنَ الْاَجْدَاثِ كَاَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُّنْتَشِرٌ ﴿٧﴾
مُّهْطِعِيْنَ اِلَى الدَّاعِ ؕ يَقُوْلُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ هٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ ﴿٨﴾

The Hour (of doom) has drawn near, and the moon has been split asunder. [1] **And when these people see a sign, they turn away and say, "(This is) a transient magic."** [2] **And they have rejected (the Truth) and followed their desires, while every matter has to be settled (at some time).** [3] **And there has come to them as much news (of the earlier communities) as contains enough to warn,** [4] **a perfect wisdom, but the warnings are of no avail (to them).** [5] **Therefore, turn aside (O Prophet,) from them. (They will see the reality) on the Day when the caller will call to a terrible thing.** [6] **With their eyes humbled, they will come out of the graves like locusts spread all over,** [7] **rushing quickly towards the caller. (On that Day) the disbelievers will say, "This is a**

difficult day." [8]

Linkage between Sūrah An-Najm and Sūrah Al-Qamar

Whereas the preceding Sūrah An-Najm had ended on a note of warning to disbelievers in the words: أَزِفَتِ الْآزِفَةُ *azifat-il-'āzifah*, i.e., the Hour of their doom has drawn near, the present Sūrah opens with a similar sentence, "The Hour (of doom) has drawn near" and this statement is followed by one of its proofs, that is, the appearance of the miracle of the moon being split asunder. There are many signs of the Day of Doom; one of them is the advent of the last of the Prophets Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ itself, as reported in a *ḥadīth* 'I was sent like this with the last Hour' and he pointed with his middle and index fingers. There are many other Traditions mentioning that the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is close to the Day of doom. Likewise, a great sign of Doomsday is the miracle of the Prophet ﷺ when he split the moon into two pieces, then he rejoined them. Also, the miracle of 'moon-splitting' is significant from another point of view: Just as Allah's power split the moon into two, so will planets and stars be destroyed by Him by breaking them into very small pieces which is not impossible, as has been proved by the miracle of splitting the moon.

The Phenomenon of Moon-Splitting : A Miracle

The disbelievers of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah to produce a proof in support of his claim, and he, with the dispensation of Allah, split the moon into two parts. This miracle is verified by the concluding part of verse 1: 'and the moon has been split asunder.'. The incident has been narrated successively in Traditions of reliable authority, and reported by such learned Companions as 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar, Jubair Ibn *Muṭ'im*, 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās, Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنهم and others. 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه reports that he himself was present and witnessed when the Messenger of Allah performed this miracle. Imāms Ṭaḥāwī and Ibn Kathīr رحمهما الله تعالى have stated that the reports narrating the phenomenon of 'moon-splitting' are *mutawātir* (i.e. it has been reported successively and uninterruptedly by such a large number of authorities that their concurrence on falsehood is inconceivable.) Therefore, this Prophetic miracle has been proved by incontrovertible evidence.

It was mentioned earlier that a large number of Traditions report the

incident of 'moon-splitting', which may be summarized as follows: Whilst the Messenger of Allah was sitting at Minā in Makkah, the pagans demanded that the Messenger of Allah should produce a proof substantiating his claim. Allah split the moon in two parts. A part of the moon was over one mountain on the eastern side, and another part was over another mountain on the western side. Thus there was a mountain between the two parts. This incident took place on a moonlit night. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to all who were present: 'Be witnesses'. When all the people saw the miracle clearly, the two pieces rejoined. It was not possible for any person with eyes to deny this clear miracle. However, the pagans said: 'Muḥammad has ensorcelled us, but he cannot bewitch the whole world; so let us wait for people to come from the neighboring parts of the country and hear what they have to say'. (Baihaqī and Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālisī) Ṭayālisī records on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ that when travelers from the neighboring parts of the country arrived, they confirmed that they did see the moon in two parts. Some reports indicate that the miracle of 'moon-splitting' occurred twice, but more authentic reports confirm that the miracle occurred once only. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān) The following Traditions are worth noting, which have been taken from Ibn Kathīr:

(1) Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ؓ narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī:

إِنَّ اَهْلَ مَكَّةَ سَاَلُوْا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اَنْ يُّرِيَهُمْ اٰيَةً فَاَرَاهُمُ الْقَمَرَ شِقَّيْنِ حَتّٰى رَاَوْا حِرَاءَ بَيْنَهُمَا. (بخاری و مسلم)

'The people of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah to show them a sign, and he split the moon into two parts until they saw the mount of Hira' between them'.

(2) Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim, and in Musnad of Aḥmad,

اِنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ عَلٰى عَهْدِ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ شِقَّيْنِ حَتّٰى نَظَرُوْا اِلَيْهِ فَقَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اشْهَدُوْا.

"The moon was split in two parts during the time of Allah's Messenger, and they saw its two parts. Allah's Messenger said: 'Be witnesses'."

Ibn Jarīr has cited this report with the following addition:

كُنَّا مَعَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِمِنىً فَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ فَاَخَذَتْ فِرْقَةٌ خَلْفَ الْجَبَلِ فَقَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اشْهَدُوْا اشْهَدُوْا .

"Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ says: 'We were with Allah's Messenger at Minā. Suddenly the moon split in two pieces, and one piece went away behind the mountain. Allah's Messenger said: "Be witnesses; be witnesses."'"

(3) The narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ is recorded by Baihaqī and Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālisī in the following words:

اِنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ بِمَكَّةَ حَتّٰى صَارَ فِرْقَتَيْنِ فَقَالَ كُفَّارُ قُرَيْشٍ اَهْلُ مَكَّةَ هٰذَا سِحْرٌ سَحَرَكُمْ بِهٖ اِبْنُ اَبِىْ كَبْشَةَ اُنْظُرُوا السُّفَّارَ فَاِنْ كَانُوْا رَاَوْامَا رَاَيْتُمْ فَقَدْ صَدَقَ وَاِنْ كَانُوْا لَمْ يَرَوْا مِثْلَ مَارَاَيْتُمْ فَهُوَ سِحْرٌ سَحَرَكُمْ بِهٖ فَسُئِلَ السُّفَّارُ قَالَ وَ قَدِمُوْا مِنْ كُلِّ جِهَةٍ فَقَالُوْ رَاَيْنَا. (ابن كثير)

"In Makkah, the moon was split into two parts. The disbelieving Quraish claimed: 'This is sorcery. Ibn Abī Kabshah [the Prophet] has ensorcelled you. Therefore, wait for the neighboring travelers to arrive. If they too have seen the two pieces of the moon, so he has spoken the truth. But if they have not seen the parts of the moon, then this is indeed a magical illusion which he has performed on you.' When the travelers arrived and were asked about it, they all confirmed that they did see the two parts of the moon.' : (Ibn Kathir)

Criticism against the Miracle of 'Moon-Splitting'

The critics have raised two types of criticism against the miracle: one is based on the assumptions of Greek philosophers, and the other is based on layman's thinking.

The deviant Greek philosophers assume that it is not possible for the heaven and other celestial bodies to split or crack, and rejoin. But this is merely an idea unsubstantiated by any solid or concrete proof. Whatever proof or evidence the philosophers have advanced is flimsy, shaky, inadequate and unsubstantial. The Islamic philosophers [*mutakallimīn*] have broken down their arguments and have shown that they are baseless, false and absurd. They could not prove by any rational argument that 'moon-splitting' is impossible. Indeed, illiterate people regard every unusual thing as impossible. Obviously, the very meaning of

mu'jizah or a prophetic miracle is that it is an unusual event that is abnormal and out of general habit, which cannot be performed by common people. Any ordinary work which can be performed at any time cannot be called *mu'jizah* or miracle.

The other criticism based on a layman's thinking is that if such a wonderful event had taken place, its knowledge would have been commonplace and would have found its mention in the books of history, but they say that they have found no such thing recorded.

Such a thinking is too simplistic which lacks careful analysis. A careful analysis shows that the event had occurred in Makkah at night. At that particular moment, in many parts of the world it must have been day time where and when the question of witnessing this event does not even arise. In many other countries, it must have been middle of the night, or last part of the night when the people normally sleep. Furthermore, people who are awake also do not stare at the moon all the time. Splitting of the moon would not make any difference on the moonlight spread on the earth, so that it would attract people's attention. The event took place suddenly and lasted for a short while. It is a daily experience that in particular countries at different times lunar eclipse takes place. Nowadays a forecast is made about its occurrence well in advance, yet there are hundreds of thousands of people who are absolutely unaware of it. Can this be the proof that the lunar eclipse did not take place? Thus if the event is not recorded in world history books, its occurrence cannot be denied or refuted.

Besides, the event is recorded in the famous and reliable history book of India called 'Tarīkh-e-Farishtah'. It has been mentioned in this book that the Mahārājah, a native ruler, of Malabār had witnessed this phenomenon that night with his own eyes, and had it entered in his diary. This incident was the cause of his embracing Islam. Earlier on the narratives of Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālisī and Baihaqī were quoted about the pagans of Makkah themselves who inquired from the people arriving from the neighboring parts of the country and they confirmed and verified that they had seen it. Allah, the Pure and the Exalted, knows best!

وَإِنْ يَّرَوْا اٰيَةً يُّعْرِضُوْا وَيَقُوْلُوْا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ (And when these people see a sign, they

turn away and say, "[This is] a transient magic.... 54:2). The word *mustamirr*, in the popular sense of the word, as used in Persian and Urdu, means something lasting or enduring. However, in the Arabic language it is sometimes used in the sense of passing away or coming to an end, being derived from *marra* and *istamarra*. Leading authorities on Tafsīr, like Mujāhid and Qatādah رحمهما الله تعالى, have applied this sense of the word in the present context. Thus the verse means that the Quraish alleged that the sign of moon-splitting they saw was an illusion and false; its effect will soon diminish and fade away. Another meaning of the word *mustamirr* is strong and firm. Abūl-'Āliyah and Ḍaḥḥāk رحمهما الله تعالى interpret the word in this sense, meaning that this is a very potent sorcery.

وَكُلُّ اَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ (...while every matter has to be settled....54:3). The literal meaning of the word *istiqrār* is to settle. The verse means that everything must ultimately reach its end and the matter must become clear. If a veil is fabricated and cast over the truth or reality, eventually [in its designated time] the false veil will be removed and the truth and falsehood will be clearly distinguished.

مُّهْطِعِيْنَ اِلَى الدَّاعِ (rushing quickly towards the caller....54:8). The word *muhṭi'īn* literally denotes walking quickly with one's head raised above. This, together with the two preceding verses, gives a graphic picture of the Day of Gathering or Reckoning. The people will hasten hurriedly in the direction of the voice of the Caller towards the *maḥshar* (area of Reckoning). The words: "With their eyes humbled,." in preceding verse (7) are in no conflict with the present verse, because there will be many different occasions in *maḥshar*. On some of these occasions, the eyes of all the people will be cast down.

Verses 9 - 17

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ فَكَذَّبُوْا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوْا مَجْنُوْنٌ وَّازْدُجِرَ ﴿٩﴾
فَدَعَا رَبَّهٗٓ اَنِّيْ مَغْلُوْبٌ فَانْتَصِرْ ﴿١٠﴾ فَفَتَحْنَآ اَبْوَابَ السَّمَآءِ بِمَآءٍ
مُّنْهَمِرٍ ﴿١١﴾ وَّفَجَّرْنَا الْاَرْضَ عُيُوْنًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَآءُ عَلٰٓى اَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ
﴿١٢﴾ وَحَمَلْنٰهُ عَلٰى ذَاتِ اَلْوَاحٍ وَّدُسُرٍ ﴿١٣﴾ تَجْرِيْ بِاَعْيُنِنَا جَزَآءً

لِّمَنْ كَانَ كُفِرَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ تَّرَكْنٰهَآ اٰيَةً فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿١٥﴾
فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِىْ وَنُذُرِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْاٰنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ
مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿١٧﴾

The people of Nūḥ denied (the truth) before them. So they rejected Our slave, and said, "(He is) a madman", and he was (also) threatened (by them). [9] **So he prayed to his Lord saying, "I am overpowered, so defend (me)."** [10] **So We opened the gates of the sky with water pouring forth profusely,** [11] **and We caused the earth to gush forth as springs; so the water (of both kinds) met together for a destined event.** [12] **And We caused him (Nūḥ) to board that (ship) which had planks and nails,** [13] **which sailed under Our Eyes, as a reward for the one who was rejected (by the infidels).** [14] **And We left it (the ship) as a sign. So, is there one to take lesson?** [15] **How then was My torment and My warnings?** [16] **And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?** [17]

The Story of the People of Nūḥ عليه السلام and the Lesson Learnt from it

مَجْنُونٌ وَّازْدُجِرَ (and said, "(He is) a madman", and he was threatened... 54:9). The word *wazdujira* literally denotes 'he was rebuked'. It refers to the attitude of the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام who rebuked and threatened him to stop him from preaching. On another occasion in the Qur'ān, we read that the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام threatened and warned him that if he does not stop propagating his message, he would be stoned to death.

'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid reports from Mujāhid that when some of his people found him somewhere, they would choke him, as a result he would become unconscious. But when he recovered, he would pray to Allah, 'O Allah! Forgive my people, for they do not know the truth'. In this way, he endured the persecution of his people patiently for nine hundred and fifty years, prayed for their forgiveness and understanding of the truth. Eventually, when the situation became intolerable, and he could no longer resist his people, he invoked Allah to help him against them. As a result, Allah opened the gates of the heaven with torrential rain, and the entire nation was drowned which is mentioned in the forthcoming verse.

فَالْتَقَى الْمَآءُ عَلٰٓى اَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ (so the water [of both kinds] met together for a

destined event....54:12). In other words, the rain water pouring down from the skies in torrents and also bubbling water gushing forth from under the ground, caused the Deluge [a huge flood] which engulfed the entire land, and thus the Divine decree was fulfilled, destroying the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام to the last man, and even the peaks of the mountains could not give them any shelter.

ذَاتِ أَلْوَاحٍ وَّدُسُرٍ (to board that [ship] which had planks and nails...54:13). The word *alwāḥ* is the plural of *lawḥ* and it refers to a board or a plank. The word *dusur* is the plural of *disār* and it stands for nail. It also means a cord of fibres of the palm tree with which the planks of a ship are bound together.

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ (And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?....54:17). The word *dhikr* in the prepositional phrase '*lidh-dhikr*' has several shades of meaning: to remember or memorize or by-heart; and to take heed of admonition and warnings. Both these meanings are equally applicable here. Allah has made it easy to memorize the Holy Qur'ān. The followers of the previous scriptures were not privileged to memorize their entire book, word by word - whether Torāh, Injīl or Zabūr. It is one of the privileges conferred on Muslims that He has made it easy, even for the tender-aged children, to commit the entire Qur'ān to memory, word for word, without missing out a single letter. The Qur'ān is preserved in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Ḥuffaẓ for the past fourteen hundred years in every age, people and their children of every level, in every region or territory of the world.

The verse could also mean that Allah has made the Qur'ān so simple that just as an intellectual and knowledgeable person benefits from its contents, so does a layman, having no expertise in relevant sciences. He too can benefit from its admonition and warnings (at his own level).

Qur'ān is Made Simple to Memorize and to Take Heed; Not for *Ijtihād* or *Istinbāṭ*

In this verse the verb يَسَّرْنَا *yassarnā* [We have made easy] is qualified by the prepositional phrase لِلذِّكْرِ *lidh-dhikri* [for seeking advice]. This implies that the Qur'ān has been made easy to the extent of memorizing it and paying heed to its advice and warnings, from which all can benefit -

whether a learned scholar or an unlearned person, whether young or old. This does not necessarily imply that derivation or deduction of laws and injunctions from the Qur'ān is easy for everybody. *Ijtihād* or *Istinbāṭ* (deduction) of injunctions from the Qur'ān is a science, having its own complex rules. Scholars well-grounded in knowledge have spent years of their life to attain to the position where they could exercise *Ijtihād* and Istinbāṭ. It is not a field where every ordinary person or layman can play his role

This indicates the error of some of the deviant people who, on the strength of this statement, wish to pose as *mujtahid* and derive laws and injunctions with their own reasoning, without acquiring complete and profound knowledge of the Qur'ān, and without fully grasping its methodological principles and rules. This is clear deviation!

Verses 18 - 42

كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِىْ وَنُذُرِ ﴿١٨﴾ اِنَّا اَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيْحًا
صَرْصَرًا فِىْ يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ ﴿١٩﴾ تَنْزِعُ النَّاسَ كَاَنَّهُمْ اَعْجَازُ
نَخْلٍ مُّنْقَعِرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِىْ وَنُذُرِ ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا
الْقُرْاٰنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُوْدُ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٢٣﴾
فَقَالُوْٓا اَبَشَرًا مِّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَّتَّبِعُهٗٓ اِنَّآ اِذًا لَّفِىْ ضَلٰلٍ وَّسُعُرٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ ءَاُلْقِىَ
الذِّكْرُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ اَشِرٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ غَدًا مَّنِ
الْكَذَّابُ الْاَشِرُ ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّا مُرْسِلُوا النَّاقَةِ فِتْنَةً لَّهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ
﴿٢٧﴾ وَنَبِّئْهُمْ اَنَّ الْمَآءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلُّ شِرْبٍ مُّحْتَضَرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾
فَنَادَوْا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطٰى فَعَقَرَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِىْ وَنُذُرِ
﴿٣٠﴾ اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَّاحِدَةً فَكَانُوْا كَهَشِيْمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ
﴿٣١﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْاٰنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ
لُوْطٍ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا اِلَّآ اٰلَ لُوْطٍ نَجَّيْنٰهُمْ

بِسَحَرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ نِّعْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِيْ مَنْ شَكَرَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ
اَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدُوْهُ عَنْ ضَيْفِهٖ
فَطَمَسْنَآ اَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوْقُوْا عَذَابِيْ وَنُذُرِ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُمْ بُكْرَةً
عَذَابٌ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَذُوْقُوْا عَذَابِيْ وَنُذُرِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْاٰنَ
لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَ اٰلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ ﴿٤١﴾
كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ اَخْذَ عَزِيْزٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

(The people of) 'Ād rejected (their prophet). How then was My torment and My warnings? [18] **We did send to them a furious wind in a day of lasting bad luck,** [19] **plucking people away, as if they were trunks of uprooted palm-trees.** [20] **How then was My torment and My warnings?** [21] **And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?** [22] **(The people of) Thamūd rejected the warners.** [23] **So they said, "Shall we follow a single human being from among us? Then we will be in error and insanity.** [24] **Is it that the advice has been cast upon him alone out of all of us? No, but he is a bragging liar."** [25] **Tomorrow they will know who is the bragging liar!** [26] **We are going to send the She-camel as a trial for them; so watch them (O Ṣāliḥ,) and keep patience,** [27] **and tell them that water (of the well) is to be shared between them (and the She-camel), so as the right of having water shall be attended by each (alternatively).** [28] **Then they called their man (to kill the She-camel,) so he undertook (the task) and killed (the She-camel).** [29] **How then was My torment and My warnings?** [30] **We sent upon them a single Cry, and they were like crushed leafs of a hedge-builder.** [31] **And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?** [32] **The people of Lūṭ rejected the warners.** [33] **We sent upon them a rain of stones, except the family of Lut whom We saved in the last hours of night,** [34] **as a grace from Us. This is how We reward the one who offers gratitude.** [35] **And he (Lut) had certainly warned them of Our grasp, but they disputed the warnings.** [36] **And they had even tried to tempt him against his guests (so that they may snatch them away for bad purpose,) but We blinded their eyes: "Now taste**

My torment and My warnings!" [37] **And on the next morning, a lasting torment overtook them:** [38] **"Now taste My torment and My warnings."** [39] **And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?** [40] **And the warners came to the family of Fir'aun (Pharaoh).** [41] **(But) they rejected all Our signs; so We seized them - a seizure by a Mighty, a Powerful Being.** [42]

Lexicological Analysis

The word سُعُر *su'ur* has appeared twice in this Sūrah. First it has appeared in verse 24 in connection with the people of Thamūd where it is their own word, and means 'madness or insanity'. The second time, the word appears in connection with the punishment of the sinners where it is the word of Allah in the forthcoming verse [47] فِیْ ضَلٰلٍ وَّسُعُرٍ Here the word *su'ur* may also be taken in the sense of Hell-Fire. According to lexicologists, the word *su'ur* is used in both these senses.

رَاوَدُوْهُ عَنْ ضَيْفِهٖ (And they had even tried to tempt him against his guests...54:37). The word *murawadah* signifies to entice someone to satisfy one's lust. This verse refers to the night when the angels came to Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام in the shape of handsome young men, as a test from Allah for his people who were addicted to homosexuality. Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام hosted his guests. The licentious people came to him from every direction, and the Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام had to shut the door to protect his guests. They came during the night and tried to break the door down and scale the walls to come in. The immoral behaviour of his people distressed Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام but when the guests revealed to him that they were angels and have been sent by Allah to inflict destructive punishment on his people, he felt comforted; they assured him that they will not be able to hurt them in any way.

Sūrah Al-Qamar started on the note that Doomsday is fast approaching, so that the infidels and pagans, who have lust and greed for this world and are unaware of the Hereafter, come to their senses. First, the punishment of the Hereafter is mentioned. Then the evil consequences of their misdeeds in the present life are cited. Reference is made to the conditions of world-famous nations, their opposition to their respective prophets and its evil consequences. The people of Nūḥ عليه السلام were the first people who were destroyed by Divine punishment. Many different kinds of devastating torments were inflicted on the people of Nūḥ, the tribes of 'Ad, Thamud and Lūṭ عليه السلام and the people of Fir'aun in

this world. Their stories and histories are recounted in detail on several occasions in the Qur'ān. Here they have been condensed.

All these five nations were the strongest and resourceful. It was not possible for any of the subdued nations to overcome any of these superpowers. The current set of verses show how the superpowers were destroyed by Divine punishment. After describing the punishment of each nation, the Qur'ān repeats the following statement as a refrain: فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِىْ وَنُذُرِ (How then was My torment and My warnings?). That is, when the Divine chastisement overtook these nations who were very powerful in terms of might, wealth and number were killed like flies and mosquitoes. In addition, the following verse is repeated to advise the Muslims and the infidels in general: وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْاٰنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدَّكِرٍ (And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?) This is to indicate that the only way to avoid the terrible chastisement is to take to the advice of the Qur'ān. Allah has made the Qur'ān easy to the extent of paying heed to the admonition and warnings. Only the most ill-fated person will not take advantage of the warnings.

The forthcoming verses address the people of the time of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ that they are not more powerful in terms of wealth, number and might than the people of Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام, the tribes of 'Ād and Thamuū, Prophet Lūṭ's عليه السلام people and the people of Fir'aun. Then how are they sitting in a careless manner?

Verses 43 - 55

اَكُفَّارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ اُولٰٓئِكُمْ اَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَآءَةٌ فِى الزُّبُرِ ﴿٤٣﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
نَحْنُ جَمِيْعٌ مُّنْتَصِرٌ ﴿٤٤﴾ سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّوْنَ الدُّبُرَ ﴿٤٥﴾ بَلِ
السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ اَدْهٰى وَاَمَرُّ ﴿٤٦﴾ اِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ فِىْ
ضَلٰلٍ وَّسُعُرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُوْنَ فِى النَّارِ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِهِمْ ط ذُوْقُوْا
مَسَّ سَقَرَ ﴿٤٨﴾ اِنَّا كُلَّ شَىْءٍ خَلَقْنٰهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَمَآ اَمْرُنَآ اِلَّا
وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَهْلَكْنَآ اَشْيَاعَكُمْ فَهَلْ مِنْ
مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَكُلُّ شَىْءٍ فَعَلُوْهُ فِى الزُّبُرِ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَكُلُّ صَغِيْرٍ وَّكَبِيْرٍ

مُّسْتَطَرٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنّٰتٍ وَّنَهَرٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ
عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

(Now) are the disbelievers among you in a better position than all of them (the aforesaid punished people), or do you have immunity (recorded) in the sacred books? [43] **Or do they say,"We are a large group, well-defended."?** [44] **Soon shall this 'large group' be defeated, and all will turn their backs.** [45] **Rather the Hour (of judgment) is their appointed time (for their full recompense), and the Hour is more calamitous and more bitter.** [46] **Surely the guilty ones are in error and madness.** [47] **On the Day when they will be dragged into the Fire on their faces, (it will be said to them,) "Taste the touch of Hell."** [48] **Verily, We have created every thing according to (Our) predestination.** [49] **And (implementation of) Our command is no more than a single act like the twinkling of an eye.** [50] **And We have destroyed people like you; so, is there one to take lesson?** [51] **And every thing they have done is recorded in the books (of deeds).** [52] **And every thing, small and big, is written down.** [53] **Of course, the God-fearing will be in gardens and rivers,** [54] **in a seat of Truth, near to the Omnipotent Sovereign.** [55]

Lexicological analysis

The word زُبُرْ *zubūr* (in verse 43) is the plural of *zabūr*, which stands for any written book. It specifically refers to the Scripture that was revealed to Prophet Dāwūd عليه السلام.

أَدْهٰى وَأَمَرُّ (...more calamitous and more bitter...54:46). The word *adhā* means more or most calamitous. The word *amarr* is derived from *murr* which originally means 'bitter'. By extension anything 'difficult' or 'painful' is also referred to as *amarr* and *murr*. In the phrase فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ وَّسُعُرٍ *fī ḍalālin wa su'ur*, *ḍalāl*, as is known, means 'error' or 'deviation' and the word *su'ur* in the present context means the 'Hell-Fire'.[1] In the phrase *ashyā'akum*, (verse 51) *ashyā'* is the plural of *shi'ah*, and it means a 'follower', that is, those who follow their pattern of life.

(1). This is according to one interpretation. The other meaning of the word is 'madness' and the translation in the text is based on this meaning. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

In the phrase مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ *maq'adi-ṣidqin*, the word *maq'ad* means 'seat' and the word *ṣidq* means 'truth' and implies the 'seat of truth' where there will be no idle and obscene talks.

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنٰهُ بِقَدَرٍ (Verily, We have created every thing according to [Our] predestination...54:49). In the prepositional phrase *bi-qadar,* the word *qadar* literally denotes to 'measure' and to create something with a proper measure and proportion. It is possible for this literal sense of the word to apply in the current verse: Allah is the Supreme Sage Who created every species of the existent entity wisely with proper measurement - whether big or small, and in different shapes and sizes. Having created, He maintains the structure of every individual in a very wise measurement: The fingers and toes are not equal in size; the lengths are different; the length and breadth of hands and legs are wisely structured; and their bones, muscles and skins are created flexible to stretch and contract. When we analyze every single part of every single limb and organ of [human] body, we discern the wondrous vistas of Divine wisdom opening up.

As a theological term, *qadar* is used in the sense of *taqdīr* [Divine predetermination, predestination, preordainment, preordering or decree]. Most authorities on Tafsīr , on account of some versions of *ḥadīth*, take the word *qadar* here in this sense. It is recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that once the pagans of Quraish came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ debating and arguing with him on the question of *taqdīr* (Predestination). On that occasion this verse was revealed. In the light of this tradition, the verse purports to say that Allah has predetermined the total sum of everything. He created everything with predestined limits before they were created. He knew everything that will occur before it occurred, and recorded everything [time and place, growth and decline] that will occur, before they occurred. Everything that occurs in this world, occurs according to the Divine Plan worked out in Pre-Eternity or Eternity-without-Beginning.

The question of *taqdīr*, according to *Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jamā'ah*, is one of the affirmed and standard articles of faith in Islam. Anyone who denies it outright is an atheist or goes out of the pale Islam, and the sects that deny it by convoluted or twisted interpretation are *fāsiqīn* [sinners or

transgressors]. Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd and Ṭabarānī record a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ that the Holy Messenger ﷺ said: "Some members of every community are Magians, and the Magians of my Ummah are those who deny *taqdīr*. If they fall ill, do not visit them; and if they die, do not attend their funerals." (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī.) Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qamar
Ends here

Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān

(The All-Merciful)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 78 verses and 3 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 25

اَلرَّحْمٰنُ ﴿١﴾ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْاٰنَ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ
﴿٤﴾ اَلشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَّالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدٰنِ
﴿٦﴾ وَالسَّمَآءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيْزَانَ ﴿٧﴾ اَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِى الْمِيْزَانِ
﴿٨﴾ وَاَقِيْمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيْزَانَ ﴿٩﴾ وَالْاَرْضَ
وَضَعَهَا لِلْاَنَامِ ﴿١٠﴾ فِيْهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَّالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْاَكْمَامِ ﴿١١﴾
وَالْحَبُّ ذُوالْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ ﴿١٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ
﴿١٣﴾ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ ﴿١٤﴾ وَخَلَقَ الْجَآنَّ
مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّنْ نَّارٍ ﴿١٥﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿١٦﴾ رَبُّ
الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ ﴿١٧﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿١٨﴾
مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيٰنِ ﴿١٩﴾ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَّا يَبْغِيٰنِ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ
رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٢١﴾ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ
اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنْشَئٰتُ فِى الْبَحْرِ

كَالْأَعْلَامِ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢٥﴾

The Raḥmān (The All-Merciful) [1] has taught the Qur'ān. [2] He has created man. [3] He has taught him (how) to express himself. [4] The sun and the moon are (bound) by a (fixed) calculation. [5] And the vine and the tree both prostrate (to Allah). [6] And He raised the sky high, and has placed the scale, [7] so that you should not be wrongful in weighing. [8] And observe the correct weight with fairness, and do not make weighing deficient. [9] And the earth is placed by Him for creatures, [10] in which there are fruits and the date-palms having sheaths, [11] and the grain having chaff, and fragrant flowers. [12] So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [13] He has created man from dry clay, ringing like pottery, [14] and created Jann (father of the Jinn) from a smokeless flame of fire. [15] So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [16] He is the Lord of both points of sunrise and both points of sunset. [17] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [18] He has set forth the two seas that meet together, [19] while between them there is a barrier they do not transgress. [20] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [21] From both of them come forth the pearl and the coral. [22] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [23] And His are the sailing ships raised up in the sea like mountains. [24] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [25]

Linkage of the Sūrah and the Wisdom of Repeating the words, 'Which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?'

The preceding Sūrah Al-Qamar was mainly concerned with some of the rebellious nations of antiquity who were punished for rejecting the Divine Message. The description of every punishment was followed by the sentence: فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ (Then how was My torment and My warnings? ...54:16). This sentence was repeated many times in order to warn people against similar Divine punishment. Another verse that was repeated as a refrain at telling intervals is وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَّكِرٍ "And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?...54:17). This verse urges people to accept the Qur'ānic Message, believe in it and follow its right guidance.

Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, on the other hand, mainly describes the boons and bounties of Allah, of this world as well as of the Hereafter. Thus when a particular bounty of Allah is described, the verse فَبِاَیِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّکُمَا تُکَذِّبٰنِ *fa-bi-ayyi' ālā'i Rabbikumā tukadhdhibān* (So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) is used deliberately as a refrain in order to awaken the people and urge them to give thanks to Allah for His favours. This verse is repeated thirty-one times in the Sūrah. According to the rules of stylish usage, repetition of an expression serves the deliberate purpose of 'emphasis'. Especially, the repetition in these two Sūrahs of the Qur'ān is repetition only in apparent form. In reality, the repeated sentence is each time related to a new subject, and having its own significance, cannot be taken as redundant. In Sūrah Al-Qamar, the فَکَیْفَ کَانَ عَذَابِیْ (Then how was My torment 54:16) has followed the description of each new torment. Likewise, in Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, after the description of every new bounty the verse فَبِاَیِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّکُمَا تُکَذِّبٰنِ (So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) is repeated, which being related to a new subject is not redundant. 'Allāmah Suyūṭī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ terms this device of repetition as *At-tardīd*. Arab masters of eloquence, regard this device as aesthetically beautiful, polished, effective, moving, forceful and persuasive use of language. The device is used both in prose as well as in poetry. It is used not only in Arabic but [almost in all the languages of the world, as for instance] the most accomplished and consummate poets of Persian and Urdu have used them. This is no occasion to collect samples of their compositions here. Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī has collected its several examples on this occasion.

Was Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān Revealed in Makkah or Madinah?

On the basis of a few narratives Imām Qurṭubī concluded that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah, and he prefers this view. Tirmidhī records from Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited this Sūrah before some people who remained silent. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

> "I recited this Sūrah to the Jinns, on the night of Jinn, and their receptive response was better than yours! Whenever I recited Allah's statement فَبِاَیِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّکُمَا تُکَذِّبٰنِ (So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) They said: لَابِشَیْءٍ مِّنْ نِّعَمِکَ رَبَّنَا نُکَذِّبُ فَلَکَ الْحَمْدُ 'None of your bounties do we deny, our Lord! All praise is due to You'".

This narrative indicates that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah, because 'the night of the Jinn' refers to the night when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ met the Jinns to convey to them the Message of the Qur'ān and impart knowledge to them. This incident took place in Makkah. Likewise, Imām Qurṭubī refers to a few more narratives which indicate that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah .

The opening word of the first verse of the Sūrah is Ar-Raḥmān (The All-Merciful). One of the reasons for beginning the Sūrah with this name of Allah is presumably that the infidels of Makkah were unaware of this name of Allah. They used to say, مَا الرَّحْمٰنُ؟ "What is Ar-Raḥmān? " [as mentioned in 25:60] This name has been selected here to let them know it.

The second reason could be to indicate that teaching the Qur'ān, which has been mentioned in the next verse as Allah's act, was a sheer gift flowing from Allah's beneficence, and not because this or any other act is obligatory on Allah for which He could be held responsible, nor because He is in need of anyone.

In the entire Sūrah, Allah's bounties - worldly as well spiritual - are continuously recounted. The greatest of all bounties is the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān, because it is an all-comprehensive Book directing man in temporal and spiritual matters and in matters relating to this world and the next. Those who heeded the Holy Qur'ān and fulfilled its right, like the blessed Companions, Allah raised their status in the Hereafter and blessed them with inconceivable bounties and favours. In this world too they are promoted to such high stations as the greatest of kings were not able to attain.

Grammatically speaking, the verb عَلَّمَ *'allama* [to teach] requires two objects, the direct and the indirect: [1] that of which the knowledge is imparted; and [2] he to whom the knowledge is imparted. Here the first object [the Holy Qur'ān] is explicitly stated, but the second object is not. Some of the exegetes express the view that the second object is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who was taught the Qur'ān directly by Allah, and through him the entire creation. It is possible to look at it from another point of view: The purpose of the Holy Qur'ān is to give guidance to the entire creation of Allah, and to teach them good morals and the righteous deeds. Therefore, no particular object has been specified. The fact that the

second object has not been explicitly specified indicates its generality, that is, it refers to the totality of human beings.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ (He has created man. He has taught him [how] to express himself...55:4) Man's creation itself is a great boon of Allah and in the natural order of things he is first and foremost, so much so that even imparting the knowledge of the Qur'ān, which is mentioned first, can only take place after his creation. However, the bounty of Qur'ānic knowledge is mentioned first, and the creation of man later, because the fundamental object of man's creation is to impart to him the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān, and for him to follow its guidance as stated elsewhere in the Qur'ān: وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me.) [51:56] Surely, worship without Divine guidance is not possible. The source of the Divine guidance is the Holy Qur'ān. Thus Qur'ānic knowledge is mentioned before man's creation.

Having created man, uncountable bounties are bestowed upon him. Of them, imparting the knowledge of expression has been mentioned especially, because the bounties necessary for man's growth and development, and his existence and survival like his food and water, his protection against cold and heat, his dwelling arrangements and so on are bounties in which all creatures are equal partners. Among the bounties that are peculiar to human beings Knowledge of the Qur'ān has been mentioned first, and it was followed by the knowledge of expressions, because deriving benefit from the Qur'ān, and imparting it to others, is dependent on the knowledge of expression. The word *bayān* ('how to express himself') comprehends all the means of communication created by Allah, like speech, writing etc. There are various languages and dialects of various nations in various regions of the world. All these are constituent parts of linguistic knowledge which is the practical interpretation or application of the verse عَلَّمَ اٰدَمَ الْاَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا (And He taught Adam the names, all of them) [2:31] فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ

Allah's Signs

اَلشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ (The sun and the moon are [bound] by a [fixed] calculation...55:5) This verse draws attention to two of the celestial bodies from among the bounties of Allah. They are especially mentioned presumably because the entire system of this world depends on the

movement of these bodies in their orbits in perfect succession, according to precise calculation that is never delayed nor disturbed.

The word حُسبَان *hūsban* with *ḍammah* [=u] on the first letter is, according to some lexicologists, used in the sense of *ḥisāb*, the infinitive, meaning 'to calculate', like غفران *ghufrān* [to forgive], سُبحَان *sūbhan* [to declare purity], قرآن Qur'ān [to recite or read]. Other lexicologists feel that *hūsban* is the plural of *ḥisāb*. The meaning of the verse, according to the former lexicologists, would be: The two bodies, on which depends man's entire life, run on fixed courses. They are subject to certain laws and they perform regularly, punctually and unerringly their allocated tasks - alternation of night and day, change of seasons and determination of years and months. If we go by the latter lexicologists' interpretation that *husbān* is the plural of *ḥisāb,* then it will refer to the fact that each of the sun and the moon has its own calculated orbits. The entire solar system is proceeding on the basis of different calculations, and each one of them is so firm and accurate that no deviation has ever occurred, since millions of years, even for a second.

This age is regarded as an age of ascension for science. The marvelous new inventions of the scientific age have caused wonders even for the philosophers. However, there is a clear difference between human inventions and Divine creation, which every discerning person can observe. Human inventions are subject to a series of continuous breakdown and damage, which require to be serviced, repaired, overhauled or refurbished. A machine, no matter how strong or sophisticated, needs to be repaired or at least serviced after a while. If this is not done in time, it will remain useless. The huge Divine creation, on the other hand, needs no repairs, no service nor refurbishing at any time. Neither the solar system overtakes the lunar movement, nor does the lunar movement outstrip the solar system. The sun and the moon and other celestial bodies, each float and move in its own orbit.

وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدٰنِ (And the vine and the tree both prostrate [to Allah]....55:6). The word *najm* refers to the 'plants having no stem' and the word *shajar* refers to any 'tree' with stems or trunk, twigs and branches. All of them prostrate to Allah. *Sajdah* or prostration is the supreme symbol of humility, respect, surrender and unconditional love and obedience of Allah. In this context, the verse means that Allah has

assigned a specific task to every tree, plant, creeper, and their leaves and fruits for the benefit of mankind and they are performing their tasks without the slightest deviation from their assigned duties. The plants without stems and the trees humbly submit themselves to Allah's will. Verse [6], read along with the preceding verse [5], shows that everything, from the largest celestial body to the smallest plant, is subject to His laws manifest in nature. A little disturbance in or deviation from their set course would bring down in pieces the whole universe, which has been created for the service of man. It is inconceivable, therefore, that man for whose service this vast and complicated but perfectly regulated universe has been brought into being would have been created without a purpose. The life of man surely has a grand Divine aim to which repeated reference has been made in this entire Surah and in other parts of the Qur'ān. There are two types of obedience: [1] obedience that is carried out by free will, as for instance, man and *jinn* are given free will to choose between obeying Allah's laws or disobeying them; and [2] all other creation of Allah are assigned specific tasks or duties to perform without any choice. The latter is referred to as *iṭā'ah takwīniyyah* or *jabriyyah* 'compelled or coerced obedience'. In the current verse, the word *sajdah* refers to this type of 'obedience to Allah's laws in nature' where the natural objects have no choice.

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ (And He raised the sky high, and has placed the scale....55:7) The verbs *rafa'a* and *waḍa'a* are antonyms: *rafa'a* means 'to raise up' and *waḍa'a* means 'to put down'. The verse first describes that Allah has raised the heavens. This could have its obvious or outer meaning referring to the physical height of the sky, and it could also have it's metaphorical meaning, referring to the high status of the heaven: In relation to the earth, the heaven occupies a higher position. Normally, the earth is understood to be the opposite of the heaven. From this point of view, the heaven and the earth are treated as opposites and mentioned throughout the Holy Qur'ān in that way. Having described the high position of the heaven, the Qur'ān goes on to describe that Allah has set the balance, but 'placing the scale' *vis-à-vis* 'raising the heaven' does not seem to form a suitable pair according to the linguistic norm. As a matter of fact, a closer analysis of the context indicates that the verse is describing the 'placing of the earth'. Three verses later, verse (10) reads

وَالْاَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْاَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures...55:10) Thus the Qur'ān is actually describing the heaven and the earth as opposites. In between the two, a third factor [that of placing the scale] is inserted for a sage reason. The wisdom in this seems to lie in the fact that the verses that follow lay stress on observing justice and fairness. They do not allow violation of rights and practice of injustice. Following the verses referring to 'raising the heaven' and 'placing the earth' are verses that describe the scale and enjoin the correct use of it. This implies that the ultimate purpose of creating the heaven and the earth was to establish justice, peace and harmony. Peace, safety, security and harmony cannot prevail on earth without establishing justice. Without justice, chaos, disorder, mischief and corruption will hold sway in the land. Allah, the Pure and the Most High, knows best!

The word مِيْزَان *mizān* has been interpreted variously. In the current verse, scholars like Mujāhid, Qatādah, Suddī and others interpret it in the sense of 'justice', because that is the purpose of *mizān* [scale]. Other scholars have taken the word in its obvious sense of a piece of equipment used to determine the weights of people or things. This equipment could be a pair of scales, consisting of a bar with a pan or a dish at each end or it may be some modern equipment used for the purpose of measuring and weighing. The ultimate sense of this interpretation in any case is maintaining rights and establishing justice and fair play.

اَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِى الْمِيْزَان (so that you should not be wrongful in weighing....55:8). The earlier verse stated the creation of the scale, and this verse states the reason for its creation. The imperfect verb تَطْغَوْا *taṭghaw* is derived from طُغْيَان *ṭughyān* which stands for 'injustice'. Thus verses [7] and [8] put together mean: '[The '*mizān* or scale' has been created so that you may not transgress the balance and thus practice injustice'.

وَاَقِيْمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ (And observe the correct weight with fairness, ...55:9). The word قِسْط *qisṭ* literally means 'justice'. The meaning is obvious: 'And observe the weight with equity'.

وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيْزَان (and do not make weighing deficient...55:9). The word خسر *khusr* means 'to skimp or make deficient'. The opening part of verse [9] was the positive aspect of the injunction, and the concluding part is its negative aspect, in that it is unlawful to fall short of measure or weight.

The two parts, positive and negative, put together the verse as a whole means 'Do not cheat in weights and measures, but rather observe justice and fairness'.

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures...55:10). The word أنَام *'anām* with *fatḥa* [=a] on the first letter on the grammatical measure of سَحَاب *saḥāb*, refers to all the creatures that are on the surface of the earth. Baiḍāwī translates the word as 'everything having a soul'. Evidently, the word *'anām* in the verse refers to mankind and the *jinn,* because only these two species of Allah's creation are obligated to observe the precepts of Sharī'ah. Furthermore, they are addressed throughout the Sūrah. For instance in the refrain verse فَبِأَيِّ الآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ (So, [O mankind and Jinn,] which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?...55:13) The dual second person attached pronouns and the dual forms of the verbs second person sustained throughout Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān are addressed to Jinn and mankind.

فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ (in which there are fruits ....55:11). The word فَاكِهَة *fākihah* refers to fruits that are normally eaten after food for pleasure.

وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ (...and the date-palms having sheaths...55:11). The word أَكْمَام *akmām* is the plural of كِمّ *kimm,* and refers to 'the cover that surrounds and protects dates and other fruits in the beginning'.

وَالْحَبُّ ذُوالْعَصْفِ (and the grain having chaff, ...55:12). The word حَبّ *ḥabb* means grain, as for instance 'wheat', 'gram', 'rice', 'a kind of vetch', 'lentil' and so on. The word *'aṣf* is the outer cover of some type of grains, like rice or wheat husk, which Allah creates with His power and consummate wisdom. Man's attention is drawn to the fact that each grain of the food he eats several times a day has been created by Allah, out of His unbounded grace and beneficence, from soil and water in inconceivably wonderful ways. He protected every grain against insects with the outer cover until maturity, so that it was prepared as a morsel of food. The current verse, thus, briefly points to all those natural things that are so essential for the physical development of man. The mention of *'aṣf* [husk] is to remind that it is the fodder for your animals. This is another bounty of Allah because man needs the milk of the animals for nourishment. Furthermore, animals are used as a means of transportation to convey human beings from place to place as well as to

carry load, cargo and luggage.

وَالرَّيْحَانُ (...and fragrant flowers....55:12). The popular meaning of the word الرَّيْحَان *raiḥān* is fragrance or fragrant plant or sweet-scented plants. Ibn Zaid has interpreted the word thus in the current verse. Allah has produced a variety of fragrances and sweet-smelling flowers on plants and trees. Sometimes the word *raihan* is used in the sense of livelihood and sustenance. It is said in Arabic: خَرَجْتُ اَطْلُبَ رَيْحَانَ اللّٰهِ (I came out looking for sustenance provided by Allah.) Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ interprets it in this strain.

Mankind and Jinn are surrounded by Divine Bounties

فَبِاَيِّ الَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ (So, [O mankind and Jinn,] which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?...55:13). The word آلاء *'ālā'* is the plural and it means 'benefits, benefaction, favour, boon, blessing or bounty'. The address is to the two species of Jinn and men referred to in verse 33 below and many other verses of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān where Jinn are specifically mentioned.

The Creation of Humans and Jinns

خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ (He has created man from dry clay, ringing like pottery...55:14). The word *insān* [man] in this context refers unanimously to 'Ādam ﷺ. The word *ṣalṣāl* [clay] refers to the wet soil when it becomes dry and heavy. The word *fakhkhār* refers to the wet soil when it is baked.

وَخَلَقَ الْجَآنَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّنْ نَّارٍ (and created *Jānn* [father of the *Jinns*] from a smokeless flame of fire...55:15) The word جَانّ *jann,* refers to the class of beings called '*jinn*'. The word مَارِج *mārij* refers to the ' smokeless flame of fire'. The major element in the creation of *jinn* is the smokeless flame of fire, just as the major element in the creation of man is dry sounding clay.

Allah is the Lord of the Two Points of Sunrise and the Two Points of Sunset

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ (He is the Lord of both points of sunrise and both points of sunset...55:17) The sun rises at different cardinal points in the east in winter and in summer: Thus we have the two easts [*mashriqain*]. Similarly, the sun sets at different cardinal points in the west in winter and summer: Thus we have two wests [*maghribain*].

Allah created Different Types of Water

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيٰنِ (He has set forth the two seas that meet together...55:19). Literally, the verb *maraja* means 'to let loose'. The word *baḥrain* [two seas or two types of waters] refers to sweet and salty waters. Allah has created two types of waters. In some places the two seas meet together, the samples of which are available in every region of the world. However, where the sweet and salty waters meet, there is a distinct barrier between the sweet and salty waters. In some cases, the two types of waters are seen distinctly in higher or lower position. If the salty water overrides the sweet water, the characteristics of the sweet water will not be spoiled; nor will the characteristics of the salty water be affected in any way if the sweet water overrides it. Thus the Qur'ān states: مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيٰنِ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَّا يَبْغِيٰنِ "He has set forth the two seas that meet together, while between them there is a barrier they do not transgress....55:20)

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ (From both of them come forth the pearl and the coral....55:22). The meaning of لُؤْلُؤ *lu'lu'* is quite well-known, that is, 'pearl'. The word مَرْجَان *marjān* too is one of the 'precious jewels or gems'. It is a hard substance formed from coral which has branches like trees. Both these precious jewels or gems are produced in the waters. It is generally understood that pearls and corals are both hunted or fished for in the salty waters, not in the fresh waters, whereas the verse states that they are fished for in both kinds of waters. It is possible to reconcile the verse with the general understanding: Pearls as well as corals originate in sweet waters where it is not easy to hunt for or from which to fish out the gems or jewels. The sweet waters flow into the salty waters where the substances are carried and deposited. The pearls and corals are brought out from there. Therefore, the source of the pearls and corals is said to be the salty seas.

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنْشَئٰتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ (And His are the sailing ships raised up in the sea like mountains...55:24). The word جَوَارِى *jawarī* is the plural of جَارِيَة *jāriyah*. One of its meanings is ship and that is the sense in which it is used in the current verse. The word مُنْشَئٰت *munsha'āt* is derived from نَشَأ *nasha'a* which means 'to rise up or high, be lofty'. *Al-munsha'āt* thus refers to 'sails of the ships that are lofty'. The verse describes the wisdom of making the ship and its running on the surface of the water.

Verses 26 - 45

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَّيَبْقٰى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلٰلِ وَالْاِكْرَامِ
﴿٢٧﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٢٨﴾ يَسْئَلُهٗ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِيْ شَاْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ
﴿٣٠﴾ سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ اَيُّهَ الثَّقَلٰنِ ﴿٣١﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٣٢﴾
يٰمَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ اِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ اَنْ تَنْفُذُوْا مِنْ اَقْطَارِ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوْا ؕ لَا تَنْفُذُوْنَ اِلَّا بِسُلْطٰنٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٣٤﴾ يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ ۙ وَّنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرٰنِ
﴿٣٥﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَاِذَا انْشَقَّتِ السَّمَآءُ فَكَانَتْ
وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ
لَّا يُسْئَلُ عَنْ ذَنْۢبِهٖۤ اِنْسٌ وَّلَا جَآنٌّ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ
﴿٤٠﴾ يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ بِسِيْمٰهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِيْ وَالْاَقْدَامِ
﴿٤١﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٤٢﴾ هٰذِهٖ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِيْ يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا
الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ يَطُوْفُوْنَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيْمٍ اٰنٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ
رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٤٥﴾

Every one who lives on it (the earth) has to perish. [26] **And your Lord's Countenance will remain, full of majesty, full of honour.** [27] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [28] **All those in the heavens and the earth beseech Him (for their needs.) Every day He is at some task.** [29] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [30] **Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you (to reckon your deeds), O two heavy species (of Jinns and mankind)!** [31] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [32] **O genera of Jinns and mankind, If you are able to penetrate beyond the realms of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate. You cannot penetrate except with an authority.** [33] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord**

will you deny? [34] **A flame of fire and a smoke will be loosed against you, and you will not (be able) to defend.** [35] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [36] **So, (it will be a terrible event) when the sky will be split apart and will become rosy, like (red) hides.** [37] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [38] **On that day, neither a man will be questioned about his sin, nor a Jinn, (because every thing is known to Allah).** [39] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [40] **The guilty ones will be recognized (by the angels) by their marks and will be seized by foreheads and feet.** [41] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [42] **This is the Jahannam (Hell) that the guilty people deny.** [43] **They will circle around between it and between hot, boiling water.** [44] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [45]

Allah is the Ever-living, Free of all Need

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَّيَبْقٰى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُوالْجَلٰلِ وَالْاِكْرَامِ (Every one who lives on it (the earth) has to perish, and your Lord's Countenance will remain, full of majesty, full of honour...55:26-27). The attached pronoun [it] refers to الْاَرْض *al-ard* [the earth] which has been explicitly mentioned antecedently in verse [10] وَالْاَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْاَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures..). Furthermore, 'the earth' is one of those general things that can be referred to by a pronoun even if they are not mentioned explicitly as an antecedent. Verse [26] means that man and *jinn* that dwell on the earth are subject to decay and death. *Jinn* and man have specifically been singled out in this verse, because in this Surah these two species of Allah's creation are mainly addressed. This, however, does not necessarily imply that the heaven and the celestial beings are not perishable. In fact, on another occasion in the Qur'ān Allah has stated in general terms: كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ اِلَّا وَجْهَهٗ (Everything is going to perish except His Face). (28:88)

وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ (...your Lord's Countenance ....55:27). The word *wajh* [Face], according to majority of the exegetes, stands for the 'Being of Allah'. The attached second person pronoun in *rabb-i-kā* [=your Lord] refers to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. It is a great honour for him that he should be remembered by Allah in special ways when praising him, as for instance, *'abduhū* (His servant). Here, Allah, the Lord of lords, declares His direct special relationship with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and addresses him thus:

rabb-i-kā [your Lord].

According to the well-known exegetes, the verse purports to convey that since everything [including *jinn* and mankind] dwelling on earth will be reduced to nothing, and the heavenly bodies all brought to naught, and the whole material universe made non-existent, still human reason demands that there should be a Being who should remain and who should never die. Such a Being is Allah Who created the whole universe and Who is the First and the Final Cause of all things. He alone will abide because He is Self-Subsisting, All-Sustaining, Independent and Besought of all.

The word *fanā'* has two possible meanings: [1] everything is potentially subject to decay and death and is eventually destined to perish, having no capacity for permanence and immortality; and [2] all things will actually pass away on Doomsday.

Other exegetes have interpreted the phrase وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ 'your Lord's Countenance' to mean 'your side', that is, out of all existent beings only those things will attain permanence that are on the side of Allah. This includes the Being of Allah and His Attributes. It also includes the actions and conditions of Allah's creation that remain firmly attached to Allah and is never separated from Him in any situation. In sum, the verse means: 'Everything that man, *jinn* and angels do for Allah's pleasure will remain under His care and protection and as such will attain permanence, never to perish .' This interpretation is supported by another verse: مَاعِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ بَاقٍ (What is with you shall end and what is with Allah shall last....16:96) The phrase 'what is with you' refers to 'wealth and power, comfort and discomfort, love and hatred'. All these states and matters are transitory and must perish. The phrase 'what is with Allah' refers to 'man's actions and states which remain firmly attached to Allah and is never separated from Him in any situation are destined to last, never to perish. Allah, the Pure and Most Exalted, knows best!

ذُوالْجَلٰلِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (...full of majesty, full of honour...55:27). In other words, the Lord is the Master of Greatness, Grandeur and Tremendousness. This is Allah's Majesty that overwhelms His creation and fills them with awe. The Lord is also the Master of Honour, signifying that those who benefit by the great favours Allah has bestowed upon them and walk in the path

of truth and righteousness will be granted more favours by the Lord of Honour. Despite being the Lord of Greatness and Majesty, Allah is not like the worldly kings and rulers who would not pay attention to others or the indigent people. He grants their petition and invocation. The next verse [to be analysed in the forthcoming paragraph] bears testimony to this interpretation. The current phrase under discussion constitutes one of those special Attributes of Allah which if a suppliant were to invoke before calling upon Allah for help, protection, inspiration and a host of other things, the supplication will be readily granted as recorded in Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī and Musnad of Aḥmad. Ibn 'Amir ﷺ has transmitted that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: اَلِظُّوْا بِيَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْاِكْرَامِ (Persist [in invoking Allah] with 'O Lord of Majesty and Honour'." The imperative *alizzū* is derived from the infinitive *ilzāz* which means 'to continue firmly in some course of action'. [Maẓharī]

يَسْئَلُهٗ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِىْ شَاْنٍ (All those in the heavens and the earth beseech Him. Every day He is at some task...55:29) The verse signifies that all creatures stand in need of Allah, in all conditions and situations. They all seek His help willingly or unwillingly. The earthly creatures ask for their specific needs. In this world, they need sustenance, health and welfare, and comfort; and in the Hereafter, they need forgiveness, mercy and Paradise. The celestial creatures do not eat and drink, they do however need Allah's mercy and grace. Allah's grace, forgiveness and so on surround them all the time. The phrase كُلَّ يَوْمٍ 'every day' is the adverb of time of the verb 'يَسْئَلُهٗ 'beseech'.(1) The 'day' is not used in its popular sense, but in the sense of 'time' in general. All His creation, in different regions, in different languages implore for their needs all the time. Obviously, each member of the earthly and celestial beings has countless needs. Who else besides the Absolutely Powerful Being, the Lord of Majesty, is able to respond to their needs every moment of the time? Therefore, 'every day' is followed by the sentence هُوَ فِىْ شَاْنٍ 'He is at some task', that is, His Attributes know no limit or count, and keep finding their manifestations in diverse ways all the time. He gives life to some and causes others to die. He elevates some and others He abases. Some He

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(1) This is according to one construction of the sentence. Other exegetes have taken the phrase 'every day' as relating to 'He is at some task'. The translation of the verse given above is based on this latter construction, which is also adopted by Moulana Thanawi رحمه الله تعالىٰ. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

causes to become ill and others He cures. He alleviates the adversity of some; He causes the aggrieved ones to smile; He grants the requests of suppliants; He forgives the sins of the sinners and makes them deserving of Paradise; He gives power to some, and He snatches it away from others and abases them. In sum, every Attribute of Allah keeps finding its manifestation in diverse ways all the time.

A Warning for Humans and Jinn

سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ اَيُّهَ الثَّقَلٰنِ (Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you [to reckon your deeds], O two heavy species! ...55:31) The word ثقلان *thaqalān* is the dual of ثقل *thaqal* which denotes 'burden or load'. Thus the word *ath-thaqalān* [the dual form] denotes 'the two heavy or weighty things', and signifies 'the men' and 'the *Jinn*' as the context shows. In Arabic, the word *thaqal* refers to anything the weight or value of which is well-known. It is in this sense that the word has occurred in the following Prophetic Tradition: اِنِّیْ تَارِکٌ فِیْکُمُ الثَّقَلَیْن (Indeed I leave amongst you two weighty and valuable things... which will continue to guide you.) Some versions of the Tradition state that those two weighty and valuable things are: کِتَابُ اللّٰهِ وَعِتْرَتِی "Allah's Book and my family" and others state: کِتَابُ اللّٰه وَ سُنَّتِی "Allah's Book and my normative Sunnah [practices]". The end result of both the versions amount to the same thing because *'itrah* refers to both types of family, lineal or spiritual. Therefore, it refers to all the noble Companions. The end result of the Tradition is that after the Prophet ﷺ there are two things that will serve to guide and set aright the Muslims: [1] the Book of Allah; and [2] the example of the blessed Companions in all their mutual dealings and transactions. The version that uses *'itrah* instead of *Sunnah* means the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ that reached the Muslims through the noble Companions.

Be that as it may, the word ثقلین *thaqalain* in the Tradition refers to the two weighty and valuable things. From this point of view, *Ath-thaqalān*, in the current verse, refers to the two species of Allah's creation, *Jinn* and human beings, because they are the weightiest and most valuable beings [possessed of soul] dwelling on earth.

Then the verse says, 'Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you' The verb سَنَفْرُغُ *sanafrughu* is derived from فراغ *farāgh*, which means to be free from occupation. The antonym of *farāgh* is شُغل *shughl* [to occupy]. The word *farāgh* informs us of two things: [1] that one was occupied with

something; and [2] now he has become free from that occupation. This type of *farāgh* is common in human beings. However, neither of these senses apply to Allah. He is above them. Surely, nothing will occupy Allah from attending to anything else, nor does He become free or unoccupied like human beings do. Therefore, the verb *sanafrughu* [We are going to spare Ourselves to you] is employed as a metaphor. This metaphorical use of the word is common in human speech. This expression is used to show the importance of some work: 'We are now free to attend to you, being fully focused on you'. Anyone who fully focuses attention on any work, idiomatically it is said that 'he has no other work or he has nothing else to do'. In a verse preceding this [29], it was mentioned that the earthly beings ask for their specific needs, such as sustenance, health and welfare, and comfort; and forgiveness, mercy and Paradise. The celestial beings need Allah's mercy, grace and forgiveness which surround them all the time. From this point of view, Allah is, every moment, in a state of characteristic manifestation of His Divinity and Divine Attributes. The verse *sanafrughu* [We are going to spare Ourselves for you...] indicates that on the Day of Judgement all petitions, their acceptance and acting on them will come to an end. Of all the manifestations, there shall remain only one manifestation and that is taking account of deeds and passing judgement with absolute justice and equity. [Rūḥ]

يٰمَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا ۚ
لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطٰنٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

(O genera of Jinns and mankind, If you are able to penetrate beyond the realms of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate. You cannot penetrate except with an authority....55:33)

In the preceding verse *jinn* and mankind were addressed as *Ath-thaqalan* and warned that their deeds will be reviewed and every single one of them will attract reward or punishment. The current verse purports to say that no one will be able to hide from death, nor will anyone be able to escape from attendance or giving account of actions on the Day of Judgement. This verse does not use the expression ثَقَلٰن *Thaqalan* as in the preceding verse but explicitly uses the expression يٰمَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ (O genera of *Jinns* and mankind) '*Jinn*' is mentioned first followed by 'men' presumably because a high-power energy is required to pass through the confines of heaven and earth. Allah has given Jinns

more power than human beings in such matters. The meaning of the verse is: 'O Company of *Jinn* and human beings, if you think that you will be able to find refuge and thus avert death by avoiding the angel of death or run away from the Plains of Gathering or the Plains of Reckoning, then try to cross the bounds of the heavens and the earth if you have the power and ability to do so.' This is no mean task. This requires high-powered energy. The combined forces of Jinns and mankind will not be able to harness the energy to go beyond the confines of the heavens and the earth. The purport of the verse is not to show the possibility or probability of passing beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth. The proposition is hypothetical. The purport of the verse is to demonstrate the utter powerlessness and inability of men and Jinns to achieve this feat.

If the purpose of 'penetrating through the heavens and the earth' mentioned in the verse is to escape death, then it refers to this world and means: It is not within the power of any man or *Jinns* to cross the bounds of the heavens and the earth and escape death. This is stated according to human thinking. Otherwise, no one is outside the power and the authority of Allah, even if he crosses the bounds of the heaven and the earth. And if the escape intended by 'penetrating through the heavens and the earth' stands for 'escaping accountability on the Day of Reckoning', the purport of the verse is to demonstrate its absolute impossibility. For according to other Qur'ānic verses and Traditional narratives the heaven will crack open, on the Day of Judgement, and all the angels will border on the sides of the earth and the people will be hemmed in from all sides. The Jinn and human beings will experience the horrors of the Day of Resurrection and run in different directions. In whichever direction they run the angels will lay siege to the areas that Allah has fortified for the purpose of recapturing the escapees. [Rūḥ]

This Verse does not point to Space Exploration by Rockets and Sputniks

In the present scientific age, experiments are being conducted in an effort to come out of the gravity of the earth and to explore the heavenly bodies by rockets, sputniks and other spacecrafts. Obviously, none of these experiments are conducted beyond the bounds of the heaven. In fact, they are far below the surface of the heaven, let alone crossing the

heavenly confines. Thus this verse has no bearing on space travels and reported incidents of reaching some of the heavenly bodies. Some simple-minded people posit this verse as the basis of demonstrating the possibility of space travels, whereas these simpletons are merely displaying ignorance about the actual meaning of the Qur'ān.

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ وَّنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرٰنِ (A flame of fire and a smoke will be loosed against you, and you will not [be able] to defend...55:35) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and other leading authorities on Qur'ānic exegesis have said that the word *shuwaz* with refers to 'flame or fire without smoke' and the word nuḥās refers to 'smoke in which there is no flame'. This verse too addresses the two species of creation, the *jinns* and mankind. It addresses them and describes how fire and smoke will be unleashed against them. The verse could mean that after the reckoning is over, and the disbelievers are sent to the Hell, they will experience two different types of punishment. In some places there will be only fire and flame, with no smoke at all. In other places there will be only smoke and no flame or fire. Other Qur'ānic exegetes regard this verse as a supplement to the preceding one, and assign the following meaning to it: O *jinn* and mankind, it is not within your power to cross the bounds of the heavens. If you do attempt to escape on the Day of Resurrection, then the angels [including those guarding the Hellfire] will bring you back by directing the flames of fire and smoke. The verb فَلَا تَنْتَصِرٰنِ *falā-tantaṣirān* is derived from اِنْتِصَار *intiṣār* which means 'to help someone to defend him against a calamity' and thus the words فَلَاتَنْتَصِرٰنِ *falā-tantaṣirān* signify that the *jinns* and mankind will not be able to help each other against Divine punishment, try as they might.

The Horrors of the Day of Resurrection

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يُسْئَلُ عَنْ ذَنْۢبِهٖٓ اِنْسٌ وَّلَا جَآنٌّ (On that day, neither a man will be questioned about his sin, nor a *Jinn*...55:39) One interpretation of this verse is that no one will be asked whether or not he had committed the sin, because it will have already been recorded by the angels in the ledger of deeds, and Allah has the Pre-Eternal knowledge of it. The question will be 'why' did they commit the sin? This is the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى interprets it as follows: There will be no need for the angels of punishment to question the criminals whether or not they committed the sin. They will be known by their special marks [See verse

(41) below] clearly showing on their faces. The angels will be able to recognize them by the their distinguishing marks and hurl them into the Hellfire according to the type of misdeeds they might have committed. A composite interpretation of the two explanations is as follows: This event will take place when people will have given account of their deeds, and judgment will have been passed against the criminals to go to Hell on the Day of Reckoning. They will not be questioned nor will any negotiation be held about their sins at that stage. Their characteristic signs will be seen on their faces, and accordingly they will be hurled into Hell.

Qatādah رحمه الله تعالیٰ says that the verse refers to a stage after they will have been questioned about their sins, but they will have refused under oath. Then their mouths and tongues will be sealed, and their hands and feet will be asked to bear witness. At that stage no more questions will be asked from them. Ibn Kathīr notes all three explanations. They are close to each other, and thus there is no conflict.

يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ بِسِيْمٰهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِىْ وَالْاَقْدَامِ (The guilty ones will be recognized [by the angels] by their marks and will be seized by foreheads and feet...55:41) The word *sima* means 'a sign'. Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالیٰ says that the day when sentence will be passed against the guilty to go to Hell, the following will be their signs: They will be known by their dark faces and their blue eyes. Through grief their faces will turn pale. The angels will recognize the guilty by these signs and seize them.

The word نَوَاصِى *nawāṣī* is the plural of نَاصِيَةٌ *nāṣiyah,* and means 'forelock'. Some will be dragged by their forelocks, and others will be dragged by their feet. Or it could mean that sometimes they will be dragged by their forelocks and at other times they will be dragged by their feet. The third explanation could be that the angels of punishment will bend their foreheads down to their feet and tie the forelocks to the feet, and throw them into the Hellfire . Allah knows best!

Verses 46-78

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ جَنَّتٰنِ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَاۗءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٤٧﴾
ذَوَاتَآ اَفْنَانٍ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَاۗءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٤٩﴾ فِيْهِمَا عَيْنٰنِ

تَجْرِيٰنِ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٥١﴾ فِيْهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ
زَوْجٰنِ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٥٣﴾ مُتَّكِـِٕيْنَ عَلٰى فُرُشٍۢ
بَطَآئِنُهَا مِنْ اِسْتَبْرَقٍ ؕ وَجَنَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٥٥﴾ فِيْهِنَّ قٰصِرٰتُ الطَّرْفِ ۙ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ اِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا
جَآنٌّ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٥٧﴾ كَاَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوْتُ
وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٥٩﴾ هَلْ جَزَآءُ
الْاِحْسَانِ اِلَّا الْاِحْسَانُ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٦١﴾ وَمِنْ
دُوْنِهِمَا جَنَّتٰنِ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٦٣﴾ مُدْهَآمَّتٰنِ
﴿٦٤﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٦٥﴾ فِيْهِمَا عَيْنٰنِ نَضَّاخَتٰنِ ﴿٦٦﴾
فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٦٧﴾ فِيْهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَّنَخْلٌ وَّرُمَّانٌ ﴿٦٨﴾
فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٦٩﴾ فِيْهِنَّ خَيْرٰتٌ حِسَانٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ فَبِاَيِّ
اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٧١﴾ حُوْرٌ مَّقْصُوْرٰتٌ فِى الْخِيَامِ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ
اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٧٣﴾ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ اِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَآنٌّ ﴿٧٤﴾
فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٧٥﴾ مُتَّكِـِٕيْنَ عَلٰى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ
وَّعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٧٧﴾ تَبٰرَكَ اسْمُ
رَبِّكَ ذِى الْجَلٰلِ وَالْاِكْرَامِ ﴿٧٨﴾

And for the one who is fearful of having to stand before his Lord, there are two gardens [46] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [47] **both having lot of branches.** [48] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [49] **In both there are two flowing springs.** [50] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [51] **In both there are two kinds of every fruit.** [52] **So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?** [53] **(The people of these gardens will be) reclining on floorings whose (even) linings are of thick silk, and the fruits plucked from the two gardens will be at hand.**

[54] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [55] In them there are maidens restraining their glances, whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a Jinn. [56] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [57] They look like rubies and corals. [58] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [59] Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness? [60] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [61] And lesser than these two, there are two other gardens (for the second category of the God-fearing), [62] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [63] both dark green! [64] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [65] In both there are two springs gushing forth profusely. [66] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [67] In both there are fruits and date-palms and pomegranates. [68] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [69] In them there are women, good and gorgeous, [70] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [71] the houris, kept guarded in pavilions [72] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [73] whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a Jinn. [74] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [75] (The people of these gardens will be) reclining on green cushions and marvelously beautiful mattresses. [76] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [77] Glorious is the name of your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, the Lord of Honour. [78]

The Delight of the Righteous in Paradise

The foregoing verses spoke of the horrible punishments to be faced by the disbelievers. In the current set of verses we are told about the rewards and bounties reserved for the righteous believers. The verse 46 speaks of two Gardens that are exclusively reserved 'for those who are fearful of having to stand before their Lord'. This phrase refers to those fortunate believers who are, at all times, concerned about reckoning on the Day of Judgement and, as a result, keep away from all sorts of sins under all circumstances. Obviously, these are the people who enjoy special nearness to Allah. In verse [62] below we read: وَمِنْ دُوْنِهِمَا جَنَّتٰنِ (And lesser than these two, there are two other gardens...55:62) This verse does not specify the class of righteous believers who will receive these gardens. However, the phrase مِنْ دُوْنِهِمَا *min dunihimā* ('and lesser than these two') indicates that

the Gardens mentioned in verse [62] are for the general body of believers who are lesser in their spiritual attainment than the foremost believers who are granted special nearness to Allah.

The Qur'ānic exegetes have explained the two sets of pairs of Gardens in other ways as well. Here we have adopted the most plausible and preferable explanation: that is, the first two Gardens are reserved exclusively for the foremost believers who are granted special nearness to Allah; and the second two Gardens are reserved for the general body of believers. That the two Gardens mentioned in Verse 62 are inferior to the first two is supported by authentic Traditions. Bayān-ul-Qur'ān cites the Prophetic Tradition from Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr to the effect that while interpreting verses [46] and [62] the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: جَنَّتَانِ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ لِلْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ وَجَنَّتَانِ مِنْ وَرَقٍ لِأَصْحٰبِ الْيَمِيْنِ "There are two Gardens made of gold for believers who are granted special nearness to Allah; and there are two Gardens made of silver for the People of the Right [that is, for general body of righteous believers]." Also, it is recorded in Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr that Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib ؓ said, اَلْعَيْنَانِ الَّتِىْ تَجْرِيَانِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ النَّضَّاخَتَيْنِ "The two springs that are flowing freely [in the first two Gardens] are better than the two other springs that are mentioned as 'gushing forth' (in the second two gardens). In verse [50] springs (in the first two gardens) promised to the believers have been described as flowing freely and ceaselessly تَجْرِيٰنِ [*tajriyān*] while in verse [66] the springs (in the second two gardens) are described as 'gushing forth' نَضَّاخَتٰنِ [*naḍḍākhatān*]. The quality of 'gushing forth' is the characteristic of all springs, but the quality of 'flowing' is an additional characteristic of specific springs. This is the concise description of all four springs that the inmates of Paradise will be given.

Related Considerations

In Verse 46, the phrase, وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ (for the one who is fearful of having to stand before his Lord...55:46) refers, according to most exegetes of the Qur'ān, to standing before Allah on the Day of Resurrection to give the account of one's deeds. The word 'fearful' signifies that he is mindful under all conditions, whether in public or in private, that one day he has to appear in the Court of Allah to give an account of his deeds. Evidently such a person will never go near the sinful acts.

Other exegetes, like Qurṭubī and others, interpret this to mean : 'the

one who is fearful of the Station of His Lord'. That is, he is mindful of the High Station of Allah whereby He is watchful and keeps guard over his words and deeds, overt or covert. All his movements and activities are known to Him. This explanation is close to the previous explanation, in that Allah's keeping guard over him will keep him away from sins.

ذَوَاتَآ اَفْنَانٍ (both having lot of branches...55:48). This describes the first two Gardens. There will be plenty of trees abounding in branches and consequently their shade will be dense, and the fruits will be in abundance. The other two Gardens are described later. No such qualities are mentioned about them, which may imply their relative deficiency in this quality.

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجٰنِ (In both there are two kinds of every fruit...52). The phrase مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ "of every fruit " denotes that the first two gardens will comprehend all kinds of fruit. As opposed to this, verse [68] simply states فَاكِهَة *fākihah* [=fruits] about the second two gardens. The word زَوْجٰنِ *zawjān* [two kinds] means every fruit will be of two types. This may be referring to one kind of dried fruits, and the other of fresh ones. It could also mean that one kind will be of normal taste, and the other of some extra ordinary flavor. [Maẓharī]

لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ اِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَآنٌّ (...whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a *Jinn*....55:56). The word طَمْث *ṭamth* has different meanings. 'Menstrual discharge' is termed as *ṭamth,* and the menstruating woman as طَامِث *'ṭamith'*. It also means 'sexual intercourse with a virgin'. This second sense is meant here in this verse.

هَلْ جَزَآءُ الْاِحْسَانِ اِلَّا الْاِحْسَانُ (Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness?...55:60). Having described the two Gardens for the intimate believers, it is declared as a principle that a good deed attracts a good reward. The righteous believers will be blessed, therefore, with good rewards.

مُدْهَآمَّتٰنِ (both dark green!...55:64). This is one word verse, and it means 'dark green with foliage'. The word is derived from *idhimām* signifying, for a meadow or garden, to become of dark green hue inclining to black by reason of abundance of moisture or irrigation. This description is not assigned to the first two Gardens. This does not necessarily imply that they do not have this quality. The former Gardens are described as ذَوَاتَآ

أفنان 'having lot of branches'. This comprehends the quality of 'dark green' as well.

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَٰتٌ حِسَانٌ (In them there are women, good and gorgeous,...55:70) The word خيرات *khairāt* (translated above as 'good') refers to 'the good character of those women'; and the word حِسَان *ḥisān* (translated above as 'gorgeous') refers to 'women who have beautiful features'. These qualities too will be common with the maidens of both the Gardens, to which reference was made in the foregoing verses.

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَىٰ رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَّعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ (...reclining on green cushions and marvelously beautiful mattresses....55:76) Qāmūs explains that the word رَفْرَف *rafraf* means 'silk fabric greenish in colour' which is used in making carpets, pillows, cushions and other items of decoration. It is mentioned in the Arabic lexicon *Ṣiḥāḥ* that they are embellished with arboreal and floral patterns, which, in Urdu, is called مُشَجَّر *mushajjar*. The noun عَبْقَرِى *'abqariyy* refers to 'every fine, beautiful fabric or material' and the adjective *ḥisān* [beautiful] qualifies it.

تَبٰرَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِى الْجَلٰلِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (Glorious is the name of your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, the Lord of Honor....55:78) Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān is replete with verses that call attention to Allah's blessings, boons and bounties, and His favors upon man. In conclusion, this verse has been appended as a synopsis: What can one say about the Pure Being? Even His Name is Glorious. All Divine boons and bounties subsist by virtue of His Name. Allah, the Pure and the Most High, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Wāqi‘ah

(The Imminent Event)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 96 verses and 3 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 56

اِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١﴾ لَيْسَ لِوَقْعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ ﴿٢﴾ خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ
﴿٣﴾ اِذَا رُجَّتِ الْاَرْضُ رَجًّا ﴿٤﴾ وَّبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًّا ﴿٥﴾ فَكَانَتْ
هَبَآءً مُّنْبَثًّا ﴿٦﴾ وَّكُنْتُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ثَلٰثَةً ﴿٧﴾ فَاَصْحٰبُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ۙ مَآ
اَصْحٰبُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ﴿٨﴾ وَاَصْحٰبُ الْمَشْئَمَةِ ۙ مَآ اَصْحٰبُ الْمَشْئَمَةِ
﴿٩﴾ وَالسّٰبِقُوْنَ السّٰبِقُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ فِيْ جَنّٰتِ
النَّعِيْمِ ﴿١٢﴾ ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَلِيْلٌ مِّنَ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ عَلٰى
سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُوْنَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ مُّتَّكِئِيْنَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقٰبِلِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ يَطُوْفُ عَلَيْهِمْ
وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ بِاَكْوَابٍ وَّاَبَارِيْقَ ۙ وَكَاْسٍ مِّنْ مَّعِيْنٍ ﴿١٨﴾
لَّا يُصَدَّعُوْنَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنْزِفُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَفَاكِهَةٍ مِّمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾
وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَحُوْرٌ عِيْنٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ كَاَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ
الْمَكْنُوْنِ ﴿٢٣﴾ جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ لَايَسْمَعُوْنَ فِيْهَا
لَغْوًا وَّلَا تَاْثِيْمًا ﴿٢٥﴾ اِلَّا قِيْلًا سَلٰمًا سَلٰمًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَاَصْحٰبُ الْيَمِيْنِ ۙ

مَآ اَصۡحٰبُ الۡيَمِيۡنِ ﴿٢٧﴾ فِىۡ سِدۡرٍ مَّخۡضُوۡدٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَّطَلۡحٍ مَّنۡضُوۡدٍ
﴿٢٩﴾ وَّظِلٍّ مَّمۡدُوۡدٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَّمَآءٍ مَّسۡكُوۡبٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَّفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيۡرَةٍ
﴿٣٢﴾ لَّا مَقۡطُوۡعَةٍ وَّلَا مَمۡنُوۡعَةٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَّفُرُشٍ مَّرۡفُوۡعَةٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ اِنَّآ
اَنۡشَاۡنٰهُنَّ اِنۡشَآءً ﴿٣٥﴾ فَجَعَلۡنٰهُنَّ اَبۡكَارًا ﴿٣٦﴾ عُرُبًا اَتۡرَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾
لِّاَصۡحٰبِ الۡيَمِيۡنِ ﴿٣٨﴾ ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الۡاَوَّلِيۡنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الۡاٰخِرِيۡنَ
﴿٤٠﴾ وَاَصۡحٰبُ الشِّمَالِ ۙ مَآ اَصۡحٰبُ الشِّمَالِ ﴿٤١﴾ فِىۡ سَمُوۡمٍ
وَّحَمِيۡمٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَّظِلٍّ مِّنۡ يَّحۡمُوۡمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ لَّا بَارِدٍ وَّلَا كَرِيۡمٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ اِنَّهُمۡ
كَانُوۡا قَبۡلَ ذٰلِكَ مُتۡرَفِيۡنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكَانُوۡا يُصِرُّوۡنَ عَلَى الۡحِنۡثِ
الۡعَظِيۡمِ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَكَانُوۡا يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ ۙ اَئِذَا مِتۡنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَاِنَّا
لَمَبۡعُوۡثُوۡنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ اَوَ اٰبَآؤُنَا الۡاَوَّلُوۡنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلۡ اِنَّ الۡاَوَّلِيۡنَ وَالۡاٰخِرِيۡنَ
﴿٤٩﴾ لَمَجۡمُوۡعُوۡنَ ۙ اِلٰى مِيۡقَاتِ يَوۡمٍ مَّعۡلُوۡمٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمۡ اَيُّهَا
الضَّآلُّوۡنَ الۡمُكَذِّبُوۡنَ ﴿٥١﴾ لَاٰكِلُوۡنَ مِنۡ شَجَرٍ مِّنۡ زَقُّوۡمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾
فَمَالِـُٔوۡنَ مِنۡهَا الۡبُطُوۡنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَشٰرِبُوۡنَ عَلَيۡهِ مِنَ الۡحَمِيۡمِ ﴿٥٤﴾
فَشٰرِبُوۡنَ شُرۡبَ الۡهِيۡمِ ﴿٥٥﴾ هٰذَا نُزُلُهُمۡ يَوۡمَ الدِّيۡنِ ﴿٥٦﴾

When the Imminent Event (of Doom) will occur, [1] **there will be no one to deny its occurrence.** [2] **It will be abasing (some), exalting (others)** [3] **when the earth will be jolted with a quake,** [4] **and the mountains will be crumbled with a thorough crumbling,** [5] **until they will become dust, scattered in the air,** [6] **and you will be (divided into) three categories.** [7] **As for the People of the Right, how (lucky) are the people of the Right!** [8] **And the People of the Left? How (wretched) are the People of the Left!** [9] **And the Foremost are the foremost.** [10] **Those are the ones blessed with nearness (to Allah)** [11] **in gardens of bliss,** [12] **many from the earlier generations,** [13] **and of a small number from the later ones.** [14] **(They will be sitting) on thrones woven**

with gold, [15] reclining on them, facing each other. [16] They will be served in rounds by Immortal boys [17] with bowls and jugs and a goblet of pure wine, [18] from which they will neither suffer headache, nor will they be intoxicated, [19] and with fruits of their choice, [20] and the meat of birds that they desire. [21] And (for them there will be) houris, having lovely big eyes, [22] all (neat and clean) like a hidden pearl, [23] as a reward for what they used to do. [24] They will hear neither an absurd talk therein, nor something leading to sin, [25] but the words of *salām, salām* (as greetings). [26] As for the People of the Right, how (lucky) are the People of the Right! [27] (They will be) amid lote-trees with no thorns, [28] and the trees of *ṭalḥ*, (banana, or a fragrant tree) having layers one upon the other, [29] and a shade, spread all over, [30] and water, poured forth, [31] and a lot of fruits, [32] neither interrupted (in any season), nor prohibited, [33] and mattresses of high quality. [34] Surely We have created those (females) a fresh creation, [35] and have made them virgins, [36] amorous to their husbands, matching them in age, [37] for the People of the Right, [38] (comprising) many from the earlier generations, [39] and many from the later ones. [40] As for the People of the Left, How (wretched) are the People of the Left! [41] (They will be) in burning wind and boiling water, [42] and in a shade of black smoke, [43] neither cool nor graceful. [44] They were before that indulged in luxuries, [45] and used to persist in major sins, [46] and used to say, "Is it that when we die and become dust-is it that we will be raised again, [47] and our ancient fathers as well?" [48] Say, "All the earlier and the later ones [49] will be gathered together for a fixed time of a specified Day. [50] Then O you, the erring, the denying people, [51] you will have to eat from the tree of *Zaqqūm*, [52] and to fill with it the bellies, [53] then you will have to drink boiling water on top of it, [54] and to drink like camels suffering from the disease of over-thirst. [55] This will be their entertainment on the Day of Requital. [56]

Special Characteristic of Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah: Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's Didactic Story on his Deathbed

Ibn Kathīr cites a story on the authority of Ibn 'Asakir from Abū Ẓabyah that when Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ was lying on his deathbed, Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ paid him a visit and the following

conversation ensued.

'Uthmān ﷺ: مَاتَشْتَكِىْ؟ "What are you suffering from?"

Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ: ذُنُوبِى "from my sins."

'Uthmān ﷺ: مَا تَشْتَهِىْ؟ "Do you desire anything?"

Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ: رَحْمَةَ رَبِّى "Yes, Allah's mercy."

'Uthmān ﷺ: اَلاَ آمُرُلَكَ بِطَبِيبٍ؟ "Shall I call a doctor for you?"

Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ: اَلطَّبِيبُ اَمْرَضَنِىْ "It is the doctor who has given me the ailment."

'Uthmān ﷺ: اَلاَ آمُرُلَكَ بِعَطَاءٍ؟ "May I send you an allowance from the public treasury?"

Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ: "لاَحَاجَةَ لِىْ فِيْهِ I have no need for it."

'Uthmān ﷺ: يَكُوْنُ لِبَنَاتِكَ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ "Accept it, [please]. You are leaving daughters behind you. It will help them."

Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ: أَتَخْشىٰ عَلى بَنَاتِي الْفَقْرَ إِنِّي اَمَرْتُ بَنَاتِي يَقْرَأْنَ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ سُوْرَةَ الْوَاقِعَة. إنى سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُوْلُ: مَنْ قَرأَ سُوْرَةَ الْوَاقِعَة كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ لَمْ تُصِبْهُ فَاقَةٌ اَبَدًا. (ابن كثير ٣٠٢:٤) "You are worried about my daughters that they must not suffer from poverty. I have no such worry, because I have instructed them to recite Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah every night. I have heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, مَنْ قَرَأَ سُوْرَةَ الْوَاقِعَةِ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ لَّمْ تُصِبْهُ فَاقَةٌ اَبَدًا 'Whoever recites Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah every night will never suffer from poverty'."

Ibn Kathīr, after citing this story from Ibn 'Asākir, has supported it with other chains of transmitters and other sources.

Horrors of the Day of Resurrection

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ (When the Imminent Event (of Doom) will occur...56:1). Ibn Kathīr says Al-wāqi'ah is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection, because there is no room for doubt in its occurrence. It is real and will surely come to pass.

لَيْسَ لِوَقْعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ (...there will be no one to deny its occurrence...56:2). The word *kādhibah* in this context is the verbal noun, like *'āfiyah* and *'āqibah*. The sense of the verse is that 'the news of the occurrence of this event cannot be a false news'. Some authorities have taken the word

kādhibah in the sense of *takdhīb* [to deny] and the meaning, in that case, is clear that 'no one can deny the fact that it will come to pass'.

خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ (It will be abasing [some], exalting [others]...56:3). The verse means that the 'Inevitable Event' referred to in the previous verse will bring about a great revolution in the lives of men, as is witnessed at the time of revolution of governments. The high and the mighty will be laid low and the despised and down-trodden will be exalted; the poor become rich and the rich become poor. This is how Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه interprets this statement. The purpose is to depict the horrors of the Day of Resurrection.

Three Categories of People on the Day of Resurrection

وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلٰثَةً (and you will be [divided into] three categories...56:7). Ibn Kathīr says that people will be divided into three different categories on the Day of Resurrection. One group will be on the right side of Allah's Throne, and they are those who were brought forth from the right side of the loin of 'Ādam عليه السلام. These people will be given their Ledgers of Deeds in their right hands and will be taken to the right side of the Divine Throne. They are the inmates of Paradise.

The second category comprises those who will be placed to the left of Allah's Throne. These are people who were brought forth from the left side of the loin of 'Ādam عليه السلام. This category will be given their Ledgers of Deeds in their left hands and will be taken to the left side of the Divine Throne. They are the inhabitants of the Fire. [We seek refuge in Allah from their behaviour pattern!]

The third category consists of *As-sābiqūn* [the foremost] who are described as *Al-muqarrabūn* [the fortunate believers who are granted special nearness to Allah]. They will be placed in front of the Divine Throne. They include the Messengers, the Prophets, *Ṣiddiqīn,* martyrs and the friends of Allah. They are fewer than those on the right side. Towards the end of the Surah, the description of the three categories will be taken up again to mention that some signs start appearing, right from the time of death of a person, to indicate in which category he or she is going to fall.

وَالسّٰبِقُوْنَ السّٰبِقُوْنَ (And the Foremost are the foremost....56:10) Imām Aḥmad رحمه الله تعالى has recorded a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidah

'Ā'ishah Ṣiddīqah ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the noble Companions: "Do you know who will be the first to be accommodated in the Divine Shade on the Day of Resurrection?" The noble Companions replied: اَللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُه اَعْلَم "Allah and His Messenger know best." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "They are those who accept the truth when it is presented to them; when they are asked for the rights due from them, they fulfill them; and they judge about the matters of others as they would judge about themselves."

Mujāhid says that As-sābiqūn (the Foremost) refers to 'the Prophets'. Ibn Sirin says that it refers to early Muslims who performed their prayers facing the two qiblas, namely, *baytul-maqdis* and *baitullllah.* Ḥasan and Qatādah say that in every Ummah there will be As-sābiqūn. Some of the commentators express the view that they are people who go first to the mosque.

Ibn-Kathīr cites all these views and concludes that they are all correct and authentic in their own right. The opinions are not in conflict with one another, because *As-sābiqūn* are those who must have been foremost in their invincible faith and righteous deeds in this world, and as such they would be the 'Foremost' in the Hereafter in terms of reward which will befit their faith and good deeds.

ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ وَقَلِيْلٌ مِّنَ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ (...many from the earlier generations, and of a small number from the later ones....56:13-14) The word ثُلَّةٌ *thullatun,* means 'a party, group, company'. Zamakhsharī says that *thullatun* refers to 'a throng or a large number of people '.

Who are اَوَّلِيْن Awwalin (earlier generations) and آخِرِيْن 'Ākhirin (later ones)?

The words '*awwalīn*' (earlier generations) and '*ākhirīn*' (later ones) are used twice: First, in connection with *As-sābiqūn* (the Foremost) who are favoured with special Divine nearness; and secondly, in connection with Ashab-ul-yamin [the People of the Right, or the general body of believers]. In the case of the 'Foremost' it is mentioned that there will be 'many' from amongst the '*awwalīn*' (earlier generations) who will be categorized as 'the Foremost', but from amongst the later generations, the number of the 'Foremost' will be smaller. As opposed to this, in the description of the People of the Right, the word '*thullah*' (many) is

applied to both 'earlier' and 'later' generations in the following words: ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ وَثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ (many from the first generations, and many from the later ones...56:39-40)

The question now is: Who are 'earlier generations' and 'later generations'? In this connection, two views of the commentators have been recorded: The first view is that 'earlier generations' include all the creation of Allah from the time of 'Ādam ﷺ to the time just prior to the advent of the 'Holy Prophet ﷺ'. And 'later generations' include all the creation of Allah from the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet to the Doomsday. This interpretation is recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim [with a chain of transmitters] from Mujāhid and Ḥasan Baṣrī. Ibn Jarīr has preferred this interpretation. This interpretation has also been adopted in the Bayān-ul-Qur'ān. This is supported by the Prophetic Tradition transmitted on the authority of Sayyidnā Jābir رضي الله عنه. Ibn 'Asākir reports the Tradition [with his chain of transmitters] thus: "When the first pair of verses regarding 'the Foremost' was revealed stating that they will comprise 'many from the first generations, and of a small number from the later ones, ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ وَقَلِيْلٌ مِّنَ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ [56:13-14], Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه enquired: 'O Messenger of Allah, will there be a larger number of 'the Foremost' from among the earlier generations and a small number from amongst us?' For about a year, no revelation in this connection came down. A year later, verses [39] and [40] ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ وَثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ "many from the first generations, and many from the later ones." were revealed. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ called Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه and said to him:

اِسْمَعْ يَاعُمَرُ مَا قَدْ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ وَثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ اَلَاوَاِنَّ مِنْ اٰدَمَ اِلَيَّ ثُلَّةٌ وَّاُمَّتِيْ ثُلَّةٌ. (الحديث)۔ ابن كثير.

"O 'Umar, listen to what Allah has revealed many from the first generations, and many from the later ones). Behold! From 'Ādam to me is one *thullah* (throng) and my Ummah is another *thullah*' (throng)."

The theme of this Tradition is supported by the Tradition recorded by Imām Aḥmad and Ibn Abī Ḥātim رحمهم الله تعالى on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that when verses [13] and [14] were revealed, the Companions رضي الله عنهم found this painful, because they understood them to mean that the foremost believers from earlier nations are more numerous

than those of this Ummah. As a result, verses [39] and [40] were revealed and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stated 'I hope that you will comprise a quarter of the inmates of Paradise, a third of the inmates of Paradise. Rather, you are a half of the inmates of Paradise, and will have a share in the other half.' (Ibn Kathīr) Thus, collectively, majority of the inmates of Paradise will be the followers of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. However, a question arises about both these Traditions. The question is that verse 40 relates to the People of the Right, while verse 13 was about the Foremost. Then, how can verse 40 remove the concern of the Companions about verse 13?

Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī resolves the problem thus: The noble Companions, in general, and Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ in particular, were saddened by the verse 13 presumably because they thought that the proportion of the later generations in the 'People of the Right' will be the same as it is in the Foremost, and thus the later generations will be small in number even among the 'People of the Right'. From this point of view, they thought their number in relation to all the inmates of Paradise, put together, will be very small. But when verses [39] and [40] were revealed, the point was clarified that collectively the majority of the inmates of Paradise will be the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ even though the collective number of later generations in the category of 'the Foremost' may be smaller as compared to the previous nations, especially since a large number of the previous nations will comprise the Prophets. In relation to them, it does not matter if the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are fewer.

However, Ibn Kathīr, Abū Ḥayyān, Qurṭubī, Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Maẓharī and others prefer another interpretation: 'the earlier generations' and 'the later generations imply, according to them, the earlier and the latter followers of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ own Ummah. 'Earlier generations', in their view, are the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and their pupils, who are termed in a Ḥadīth as '*khair-ul-qurūn*' (the best generation), and 'later generations' include all those who came after them.

As for the Ḥadīth narrated by Jābir ﷺ quoted above from Ibn Kathīr, in support of the first interpretation, Ibn Kathīr himself has expressed his reservation about its chain of transmitters. He writes "وَلٰكِنْ فِيْ إِسْنَادِهٖ نَظَرٌ "In its chain of transmission, there is some defect." In support of his own interpretation, he quotes verses relating to Ummah of the Holy Prophet

ﷺ being the best of nations, as for instance كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ "You are the best of nations...". (3:110) Therefore, it is not possible that the foremost believers from earlier nations are more numerous than those of this Ummah. Thus ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ 'many from the earlier generations' refers to the earlier generation of this Ummah and قَلِيلٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ 'of a small number from the later generations' refers to the later generation of this Ummah from whom a small number will be included in the category of the 'Foremost'.

In support of this view, Ibn Kathīr has cited the statement of Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī, as recorded by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, to the effect that he recited the Verse 10 about 'the Foremost' and said, 'They have predeceased, but O Allah! make us from amongst the People of the Right hand'. In another statement, Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī is reported to have said in explanation of Verse 13: ثُلَّةٌ مِّمَّنْ مَّضىٰ مِنْ هٰذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ 'Those foremost Faith are all from this Ummah'. Likewise, Muḥammad Ibn Sirin said in connection with Verse 13 and 14: 'The scholars stated and hoped that they (the Foremost of earlier and later generations) will all be from amongst this Ummah.'

Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī puts forward the following Prophetic Ḥadīth with a good chain of transmitters in support of the second interpretation:

> أَخْرَجَ مُسَدَّدٌ فِيْ مُسْنَدِه وَابْنُ الْمُنْذِرِ وَالطَّبْرَانِيُّ وَابْنُ مَرْدُويه بِسَنَدٍ حَسَنٍ عَنْ أَبِيْ بَكْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيْ قَوْلِه سُبْحَانَه ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِيْنَ قَالَ هُمَا جَمِيْعًا مِّنْ هٰذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ.
>
> "Musaddad in his Musnad, Ibn-ul-Mundhir, Ṭabarānī and Ibn Marduyah report with a good chain on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Bakrah ؓ that, while interpreting verses [39] and [40] (Many from the earlier generations and of a small number from the later ones), the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: 'They are both from this Ummah.'"

Many Scholars of Ḥadīth report another Prophetic Tradition with a weak chain on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ also. The wordings are: هُمَا جَمِيْعًا مِّنْ أُمَّتِيْ "They [the earlier and the later generations] are from my Ummah." From this point of view, verse [7] of this Chapter وَكُنتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً "and you will be (divided into) three categories. [7]" addresses the Ummah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and all three categories will be from this Ummah .

Maẓharī has held the first interpretation as improbable, because according to the clear text of the Qur'ān, this Ummah is the best and most honoured of all nations. Therefore, it is inconceivable that the foremost believers from earlier nations should be more numerous than those of this Ummah. The higher rank of this Ummah visa-vis the other nations is proved by the express texts of the Holy Qur'ān. The Qur'ānic verse [3:110] reads: كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ "You are the best Ummah raised for the good of mankind...".Verse [3:110] reads: لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا "...so that you should be witnesses over the people, and the Messenger a witness to you." Tirmidhī, Ibn Majah and Darimi have recorded a narration on the authority of Sayyidnā Bahz Ibn Ḥakīm ﷺ in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

أَنتُمْ تُتِمُّونَ سَبْعِينَ أُمَّةً أَنتُمْ أَخِيرُهَا وَأَكْرَمُهَا عَلَى اللّٰهِ تَعَالٰى

"You are complement to the seventy nations of the days of yore. You are the choicest one and the most honourable one in the sight of Allah."

Imām Bukhārī narrates a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: "Will it please you if you are a quarter of the inmates of Paradise?" The Companions replied: "Yes, indeed, it would please us." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ إِنِّي لَأَرْجُو أَنْ تَكُونُوا نِصْفَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ

"By Him in Whose control is my life! I hope that you will comprise a half of the inmates of Paradise." (Maẓharī)

Tirmidhī, Ḥākim and Baihaqī report on the authority of Sayyidnā Buraidah ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ مِائَةٌ وَّعِشْرُونَ صَفًّا ثَمَانُونَ مِنْهَا مِنْ هٰذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ وَأَرْبَعُونَ مِنْ سَائِرِ الْأُمَمِ

"The inmates of Paradise will be ranged in 120 ranks: eighty of them will be from this Ummah, and forty from the rest of the nations." (Tirmidhī has rated this tradition as '*Ḥasan*' and Hakim as '*ṣaḥīḥ*'.)

The ratio between this Ummah and other communities in Paradise is given differently at different times, ranging between one third, one quarter, a half and two-thirds. There is no conflict in the ratios mentioned on different occasions. That was based on the estimation of the Holy

Prophet ﷺ which has been increasing at different times.

The reward of As-Sabiqun

عَلٰى سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُوْنَةٍ ([They will be sitting] on thrones woven with gold...56:15) The word مَّوْضُوْنَةٍ *mawdunah*, according to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, as recorded by Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Baihaqi and others, means 'fabric woven or inwrought with gold thread'.

وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُوْنَ (...by Immortal boys...56:17) meaning that the boys will never grow up, get old or change in shape. The preferred opinion is that the youths of Paradise, like the fair damsels of Paradise, will have been born in Paradise. They will be the servants of the inmates of Paradise. Ḥadīth narratives indicate that there will be thousands of such servants for each of the inmates of Paradise.

بِاَكْوَابٍ وَّاَبَارِيْقَ وَكَاْسٍ مِّنْ مَّعِيْنٍ (with bowls and jugs and a goblet of pure wine...56:18). The word *akwāb*, plural of *kūb*, refers to 'cups or glasses used for drinking. The word *abārīq*, plural of *ibrīq*, refers to 'jugs with sprouts'. The word *ka's* refers to 'a wine glass'. The word *ma'īn* refers to the fact that the glasses will contain wine drawn from a flowing spring.

لَا يُصَدَّعُوْنَ عَنْهَا (from which they will neither suffer headache ....56:19). The Arabic verb is derived from *sudā'* which means 'headache'. When worldly wine is taken in large quantity, it gives the drinker excruciating headache and makes him feel dizzy. The Heavenly wine is free from such harmful effects.

لَا يُنْزِفُوْنَ (..., nor will they be intoxicated...56:19). The Arabic verb is derived from *nazf*, the root-meaning of which being 'the well became empty, all the water having been taken out of it.' Here it means 'the spring of his brain or mind or senses became exhausted.'

وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُوْنَ (and the meat of birds that they desire....56:21]. It is recorded in a Prophetic Tradition that the inmates of Paradise will get meat of whatever birds they desire, as and when they desire it.

The Reward of Those on the Right

وَاَصْحٰبُ الْيَمِيْنِ مَآ اَصْحٰبُ الْيَمِيْنِ (As for the People of the right, How (lucky) are the People of the Right!...56:27). The People of the Right are initially the God-fearing and the righteous believers. Sinful believers will also join the People of the Right, some through the sheer grace of Allah, and others

will be forgiven through the intercession of a prophet or a friend of Allah. Some sinful believers will be punished for their sins, but after serving their punishment, they too will be purified and cleansed of the dross of their sins, after which they will join the People of the Right, because the fire of the Hell is not, in fact, a punishment; it is rather a way to cleanse him from the dross of his sins. (Maẓharī)

فِيْ سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُوْدٍ (..amid lote-trees with no thorns - 58:28). The word *sidr* refers to 'lote-tree' and *makhḍūd* refers to 'a tree having its thorns removed'. It also means 'a tree having the branches bent because of abundance of its fruit'. Unlike the lote-trees of this world, the Heavenly lote-trees have a different description. Their fruits will be as large as the clay jugs, and their taste cannot be compared to those found in this world, (as described in a Ḥadīth).

طَلْحٍ مَّنْضُوْدٍ (and the trees of *tulh*, having layers one upon the other - 28:29). The word *ṭalḥ* refers to 'banana tree' and *mandūd* means 'clustered', fruits piled on top of each other as in a bunch of bananas.

ظِلٍّ مَّمْدُوْدٍ (and a shade, spread all over...56:30). The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥain, that in Paradise there is a tree so large that a rider may travel for a hundred years under its shade, but would not be able to pass it.

وَمَآءٍ مَّسْكُوْبٍ (...and water, poured forth...56:31) This means the water will be flowing constantly on the surface of the ground.

وَّفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيْرَةٍ (and a lot of fruits...56:32). The word *Kathīrah* [abounding] has two senses: [1] there will be plenty of fruits; and [2] there will be an uncountable variety and kinds of fruits.

لَّامَقْطُوْعَةٍ وَّلَا مَمْنُوْعَةٍ (neither interrupted [in any season], nor prohibited ...56:33) The word *maqṭū'ah* means the fruits the supply of which is cut off at the end of the season. In this world most fruits are seasonal; some bear in summer, some in winter and others in rainy season. Once the season of the fruit is over, it ceases to be available. However, the supply of the fruits of Paradise never runs out in any season. Rather they will always be available for those who want to eat from them. Whenever these fruits are desired, they will be available and easy to grasp by Allah's power. The word *mamnū'ah* (prohibited) means that in this world there are

caretakers appointed to look after the gardens, who stop and prohibit people from picking the fruits, but in the gardens of Paradise there will be no such hindrance. The inmates will be able to pick them whenever they wish.

وَّفُرُشٍ مَّرْفُوْعَةٍ (...and mattresses of high quality....56:34). The word *fūrūsh* is the plural of *firāsh* which means 'bed, couch, mattress'. The word *marfū'ah* lexically means 'upraised, elevated'. The couches could be upraised or elevated for one of several reasons: [1] because the place itself is high; [2] because the mattresses will not be on the ground, but on the thrones or beds; or [3] because the couches themselves will be thick (and of high quality). Some exegetes have taken the word '*fūrūsh*' in the sense of 'women', because it is one of the meaning of '*firāsh*' is referred as *firash,* as in the Prophetic Tradition اَلْوَلَدُ لِلْفِرَاشِ 'The child belongs to the *firash*'. The word *firāsh* refers to 'wife'. This is corroborated by the characteristics of the women of Paradise described in the forthcoming verses. In this case, the word *marfū'ah* would mean 'high-ranking'.

اِنَّآ اَنْشَاْنٰهُنَّ اِنْشَآءً (Surely We have created those [females] a fresh creation...56:35) The word *insha'* means 'to create'. The pronoun هُنَّ *hunna* refers to the women of Paradise, although there is no mention of them in the immediately preceding verses. However, they have been mentioned in connection with 'the Foremost' in distantly foregoing verses [22-23]. If the word *firāsh* in the foregoing verse (34) refers to the women of Paradise, the antecedent of the pronoun is quite obvious. Likewise, the mention of beds, couches, thrones and other delightful items gives the pronoun the context to refer to women. The meaning of the verse is: 'We have created the Paradisiacal women in a special way, that is, the houris are created without being born biologically, and the women of this world who will enter the Paradise will also be reshaped in a way that the women who were ugly, dark-coloured or old in this world will be made beautiful, young and graceful.' It is recorded in Tirmidhī and Baihaqī on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said in explanation of Verse 35 that the women who were old, blear eyed, with gray hair and ugly features in the world will be made beautiful and young in this new creation. Baihaqi also reports from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﷺ that an old lady asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to pray to Allah that she may enter Paradise. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said in a humorous

way: لَاتَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ عَجُوزٌ "Old ladies will not enter Paradise." Hearing this the old lady got very sad, and according to some narrations, started weeping. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then explained that she would not be old when she would enter Paradise; she would be transformed into a young beautiful woman. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse 35. [Mazhari]

أَبْكَارًا (...virgins... - 56:36). The word *abkāran*, being the plural of *bikr,* means 'virgins'. The sense is the creation of the maidens of Paradise will be of such a nature that, even after every sexual intercourse, they will remain like virgins.

عُرُبًا (...amorous to their husbands,...56:37). The word *'urub*, is the plural of *'arūbah*. This refers to a woman who loves her husband passionately and is his beloved.

أَتْرَابًا (...matching them in age...56:37) The word *atrāb* is the plural of *tirb*, meaning 'a person of equal age who played together with his mate in dust'. The verse means that men and women will be made of equal ages in Paradise. Some narrations report that they will be about thirty-three years old. [Mazhari]

ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ (many from the earlier generations, and many from the later ones....56:39-40) In connection with *sābiqūn*, (the Foremost) two views of the commentators were quoted earlier as to the identity of 'the earlier' and the 'later' generations. If 'the earlier' refers to the generations from 'Ādam عليه السلام to the period just prior to the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and 'the later generations' refers to the 'Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ till the Day of Judgment, as some of the commentators have opined, then the verses would mean: 'the People of the Right' will constitute a 'large party' of believers and the righteous from all the previous communities combined together, while there will be a 'large party' from the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ alone. In this case, it is a great honor for the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that, despite the short period they lived in this world, they could be compared to all the previous communities who were headed by hundreds of thousands of Prophets. Besides, the words 'many from the later generations' has the scope of being larger in number than the 'many from the earlier generations'.

If we go by the second view of the commentators, who say that both

'earlier' and 'later' generations are from the *ummah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, then even the later generations of this *ummah* will not be totally deprived of 'the Foremost', though their number in later generations will be less. As for the People of the Right, their number will be large in both 'earlier' and 'later' generations. This fact is proved by a Ḥadīth reported by Bukhārī and Muslim from Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah ؓ in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, 'A group of my 'Ummah will always remain on the truth and dominant, unharmed by those who fail to support them and those who defy them, until the Last Hour begins.'.

Verses 57-74

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنٰكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ اَفَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تُمْنُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ ءَاَنْتُمْ
تَخْلُقُوْنَهٗٓ اَمْ نَحْنُ الْخٰلِقُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ نَحْنُ قَدَّرْنَا بَيْنَكُمُ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا
نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوْقِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ عَلٰٓى اَنْ نُّبَدِّلَ اَمْثَالَكُمْ وَنُنْشِئَكُمْ فِيْ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْاَةَ الْاُوْلٰى فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾
اَفَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تَحْرُثُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ءَاَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُوْنَهٗٓ اَمْ نَحْنُ الزّٰرِعُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
لَوْ نَشَآءُ لَجَعَلْنٰهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ اِنَّا لَمُغْرَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾
بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُوْمُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ اَفَرَءَيْتُمُ الْمَآءَ الَّذِيْ تَشْرَبُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾
ءَاَنْتُمْ اَنْزَلْتُمُوْهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ اَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ لَوْ نَشَآءُ جَعَلْنٰهُ
اُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ اَفَرَءَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِيْ تُوْرُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ ءَاَنْتُمْ
اَنْشَاْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَآ اَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْشِئُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ نَحْنُ جَعَلْنٰهَا تَذْكِرَةً
وَّمَتَاعًا لِّلْمُقْوِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

We have created you; then why do you not appreciate it as true? [57] **So, tell Me about the semen you drop (in the wombs):** [58] **Is it you who create it, or are We the Creator?** [59] **We have appointed (the times of) death among you, and We cannot be frustrated** [60] **from replacing you with others like you, and creating you (afresh) in that (form) which you do not know.** [61] **And you certainly know the first creation; then why do you**

not take lesson? [62] Well, tell Me about that (seed) which you sow: [63] Is it you who grow it, or are We the One who grows? [64] If We so will, We can certainly make it crumbled, and you will remain wondering, [65] (and saying,) "We are laden with debt, [66] rather we are totally deprived." [67] Again, tell Me about the water you drink: [68] Is it you who have brought it down from the clouds, or are We the One who sends (it) down? [69] If We so will, We can make it bitter in taste. So why do you not offer gratitude? [70] Now tell Me about the fire you kindle: [71] Is it you who have originated its tree, or are We the Originator? [72] We have made it a reminder (of Our infinite power, and of the fire of hell) and a benefit for travelers in deserts. [73] So, proclaim the purity of the name of your Lord, the Magnificent. [74]

Proof of the occurrence of the Day of Resurrection

Thus far the Sūrah dealt with three categories of people on the Plain of Ḥashr (Gathering.) The verses so far described the reward and punishment of these three groups. The current set of verses warn the deviant skeptics and atheists who completely deny the Day of Judgement and life after death, or set up partners to Allah in His worship. The verses purport to tear down the curtain of negligence and ignorance that has kept man in the dark. Whatever exists, or is coming into existence at the present time, or will come into existence in the future in this cosmic world is as a result of the creative power of Allah. He brings them into existence, retains them and makes them subservient to man. The apparent causes of these events act as veils over Reality. Had these veils been removed and man is able to witness the creation of these things directly without the mediation of these apparent causes, he will be forced to believe in Allah. However, Allah has made this world a venue of test. Therefore, whatever comes into existence comes under the veils of causes.

Allah has, with His encompassing power and consummate wisdom, created a strong connection or relation between 'causes' and 'effects'. Wherever and whenever a secondary cause occurs, the effect necessarily follows. A casual observer assigns to every 'effect' a 'secondary or extrinsic cause', thus straying into the philosophy of 'causes' and 'effects'. Man does not seem to realize that the whole system of cause and effect ends with Allah. He is the First or Primary or Intrinsic Cause or Cause of all causes [*musabbib-ul-asbāb*]. It was explained earlier in Sūrah An-Najm that a

natural order of cause and effect pervades the entire universe. Every cause, which is not itself primary, is traceable to some other cause, and this to another and so on. But as the series of cause and effect in our finite world cannot be indefinite, it must terminate at some point. The Final Cause is, therefore, the Author of the universe. It is this Final Cause towards which the present verses call our attention.

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ. أَفَرَءَيْتُم مَّا تُمْنُونَ. ءَأَنتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ (We have created you; then why do you not appreciate it as true? So, tell Me about the semen you drop [in the wombs]: Is it you who create it, or are We the Creator?...57-59). With verse 57 begins a series of arguments in support of Allah's Oneness and His power to raise the dead. The first argument in the current verse is taken from the very subtle and wonderful phenomenon of man's birth, starting with a drop of semen and developing into a full-fledged human being – the crown of all creation. Humans stop at thinking that male-female cohabitation in the process of their creation is the ultimate or real cause. Therefore, the Qur'ān poses the question to them in verse [58]: أَفَرَءَيْتُم مَّا تُمْنُونَ. ءَأَنتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ 'So, tell Me about the semen you drop [in the wombs]: Is it you who create it, or are We the Creator? In other words, a male plays a very insignificant biological role in the birth of a child in that he delivers a drop of microscopic semen in the womb of a female to combine with the microscopic ovum. Once this is done, it goes through several stages of growth and development without anyone, besides Allah, knowing what is happening. Eventually it forms into a foetus with a bone-structure. The skeleton is then clothed with flesh and skin. The soul is infused into it and the little universe [microcosm] comes into being with various systems: The nutritive and digestive system, the blood and the circulatory system, a system of human senses [sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste] and communication and the ability to think and understand. Man thus becomes a moving factory, and in none of these biological processes he has any say.

Neither of the parents [especially the mother in whose womb all this is taking place] knows whether the child is a boy or a girl, until it is born. The question is: Who creates the child in the womb of the mother, creation after creation, within three darknesses [ie the darkness of belly, the darkness of womb and the darkness of amniotic membrane]? Who made it beautiful, gave it the power of hearing and sight? Who bestowed on it the

faculty of thinking and comprehension? Only mentally blind person will fail to exclaim: "Blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators!"

The forthcoming verses [60 and 61]

نَحْنُ قَدَّرْنَا بَيْنَكُمُ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ عَلَى اَنْ نُّبَدِّلَ اَمْثَالَكُمْ وَنُنْشِئَكُمْ فِيْ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾

"We have appointed (the times of) death among you, and We cannot be frustrated from replacing you with others like you, and creating you [afresh] in that [form] which you do not know....56:60-61]."

'Death' is the end of all physical life. This is the eternal law of Allah from which there is no escape. Allah pre-determines the time of human death. Man has no choice in the matter of death which frees the human soul from the fetters and shackles of its physical habitat. Allah has pre-designated a particular point in time up to which he could live. But one should not remain lulled into a fancy that he would continue to enjoy power and his free will. Allah has the power to eliminate him any time, and create another people in his place. This is the import of the words, نَحْنُ قَدَّرْنَا بَيْنَكُمُ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِيْنَ عَلٰى اَنْ نُبَدِّلَ اَمْثَالَكُمْ "We have appointed (the times of) death among you, and We cannot be frustrated from replacing you with others like you," The concluding part of verse [61] وَنُنْشِئَكُمْ فِيْمَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ '...and creating you (afresh) in that (form) which you do not know" implies that 'Allah has the power to reshape you in a form unknown to you at the moment.' It may happen either by one's turning into dust after death, or by his being metamorphosed into an animal shape as it happened in the past nations, some turned into monkeys and others into swine by way of punishment. It is also possible that they might be transformed into stones or minerals.

Creation of Plants, Sending down of Rain and Creation of Fire are Proof of Allah's Oneness

After referring to the birth of man from very insignificant beginning, the Sūrah, from verse [63] onwards, proceeds to give a brief account of things upon which man's life on earth depends. There are three principal things upon which man's life in this world depends - food, water and fire. The first thing is food to which verse [63] refers.

أَفَرَأَيْتُم مَّا تَحْرُثُونَ (Well, tell Me about that [seed] which you sow:...56:63) In the matter of human creation, man was lost in the secondary or extrinsic causes and lost sight of his Real Creator and Master, the Primary or Intrinsic Cause of his creation. This unawareness was unveiled in a particular way. In a similar style, the reality of his source of nourishment is explicated. Allah poses the question to man: 'Indeed you till the land and plant the seeds but who causes them to sprout and grow - you or Allah?' When considered carefully, we will come up with the answer that the farmer or tiller has a very limited role to play. He ploughs the land and fertilizes the soil with manure, and thus softens it so that if the seed germinates, it will not be hampered by the hard ground. All of man's efforts move around this point. Once the plant sprouts, he takes care of it in that direction. But man is not the primary cause of the shoots pushing forth from the seed nor can he claim that he made the plant or tree. Therefore, we go back to the fundamental question: Who caused the seed lying under heaps and heaps of sand to germinate and come out to the surface of the earth so beautifully, comprising untold benefits? There can be only one answer to this question: The All-Encompassing Power and the Most Wonderful creation of the Master Creator of the universe.

Next to food, water is the most important thing upon which human life depends for its sustenance. Here too the Qur'ān, in its inimitable style, poses the question: 'Have you considered the water you drink? Did you send it down from the clouds, or did We send it?' The answer is obvious: 'Allah'. Fire plays a most important part in the life of man. Much of his physical comfort depends upon it. [It is a thing of great utility. In this mechanistic age life is inconceivable without the use of fire. No industry, trade or travel is possible without it.] The Qur'ān again, in its unique and unparalleled style, poses the question: 'Have you considered the fire you kindle? Did you make its timber to grow, or did We make it?' Here too the answer is obvious: 'Allah'. Of course, in both instances the Qur'ānic answers are elaborate.

The last answer is summarized thus in verse [73] نَحْنُ جَعَلْنٰهَا تَذْكِرَةً وَّمَتَاعًا لِّلْمُقْوِينَ "We have made it a reminder [of Our infinite power, and of the fire of hell] and a benefit for travelers in deserts....56:73) The word *muqwīn* is derived from the infinitive *iqwā'* and it comes from the root-word *qiwā'* which means 'waste, barren land, ruin or desert'. Thus the word *muqwī*

means 'a traveler or a wayfarer of a desert who alights to prepare his meals'. The verse purports to say that all these creations are the result of Allah's power and wisdom.

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيْمِ (So, proclaim the purity of the name of your Lord, the Magnificent...56:74) The logical and rational conclusion of the above considerations should be for man to believe in the All-Encompassing Divine Power and in His Oneness, and declare the Purity of the Great Lord; for that is the way to express His gratitude.

Verses 75 - 96

فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِمَوٰقِعِ النُّجُوْمِ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَقَسَمٌ لَّوْتَعْلَمُوْنَ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾
اِنَّهٗ لَقُرْاٰنٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ فِىْ كِتٰبٍ مَّكْنُوْنٍ ﴿٧٨﴾ لَّا يَمَسُّهٗٓ اِلَّا
الْمُطَهَّرُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ اَفَبِهٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ
اَنْتُمْ مُّدْهِنُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَتَجْعَلُوْنَ رِزْقَكُمْ اَنَّكُمْ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَلَوْلَآ
اِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلْقُوْمَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَاَنْتُمْ حِيْنَئِذٍ تَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَنَحْنُ اَقْرَبُ
اِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ لَّا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَلَوْلَآ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِيْنِيْنَ
﴿٨٦﴾ تَرْجِعُوْنَهَآ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَاَمَّآ اِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ
﴿٨٨﴾ فَرَوْحٌ وَّرَيْحَانٌ ۙ وَّجَنَّتُ نَعِيْمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَاَمَّآ اِنْ كَانَ مِنْ
اَصْحٰبِ الْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَسَلٰمٌ لَّكَ مِنْ اَصْحٰبِ الْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٩١﴾ وَاَمَّآ
اِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ الضَّآلِّيْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَنُزُلٌ مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ ﴿٩٣﴾
وَّتَصْلِيَةُ جَحِيْمٍ ﴿٩٤﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِيْنِ ﴿٩٥﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ
رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٩٦﴾

So, I swear by the setting places of the stars, [75] – **and indeed it is a great oath, if you are to appreciate** – [76] **it is surely the Noble Qur'ān,** [77] **(recorded already) in a protected book (i.e. the Preserved Tablet)** [78] **that is not touched except by the purified ones (the angels).** [79] – **a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.** [80] **Is it this**

discourse that you take lightly, [81] **and take your denial as your livelihood?** [82] **So why (do you) not (interfere) when the soul (of a dying person) reaches the throat,** [83] **and you are watching?** [84] **And We are closer to him than you, but you do not perceive.** [85] **So, if you are not going to be recompensed (in the Hereafter for your deeds), then why do you not** [86] **bring the soul back, if you are truthful?** [87] **So, in case he (the dying person) is from among those blessed with nearness,** [88] **then (for him) there is comfort and fragrance and garden of bliss.** [89] **And in case he is from among the People of the Right,** [90] **then, (it will be said to him,) " Peace is for you, being one of the People of the Right."** [91] **But if he is one of the deniers, the astray,** [92] **then (for him) there is entertainment from boiling water,** [93] **and burning in the Hell.** [94] **Indeed this is certainty in its true sense.** [95] **So, proclaim the purity of the name of your Lord, the Magnificent.** [96]

Sequencing of Arguments

Preceding verses put forward rational arguments, in support of life after death, by inviting attention to Allah's infinite power. The current verses are meant to prove this fact by giving an authoritative reference, that is, the Qur'ān.

Allah swears to the Greatness of the Qur'ān

فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِمَوٰقِعِ النُّجُوْمِ (So, I swear by the setting places of the stars...56:75) The words لَآ اُقْسِمُ 'I swear' are prefixed in the text by the particle لَا *lā* [no] which is not translated in the text, because it is idiomatically prefixed to 'oath', as for example لَاوَاللّٰهِ *lā wallāh* [No, by Allah]. In pre-Islamic Arabic, we come across the idiomatic oath لَاوَاَبِيْكَ *lā wa-abīk* [No, by your father]. Some lexicologists say that the particle *lā* is added only as an idiomatic expression [*zā'idah*] which carries no sense, and others say that when the refutation of an addressee's hypothesis is intended, لَا *lā* is used to signify that the assumption of the addressee is not correct, but the right thing is that which follows.

The word مَوَاقِع *mawāqi'* is the plural of مَوْقَع *mawq'* and refers to the points where or times when the stars set. Here, like in Sūrah An-Najm وَالنَّجْمِ اِذَا هَوٰى "By the star when it goes down to set, [1]", the oath of stars is qualified by their setting-time. The wisdom underlying this is that when the stars set, their function seems to have been cut off from the horizon,

and we witness effects of their vanishing. This is the proof of their perishability and dependence on Divine power.

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْاٰنٌ كَرِيْمٌ فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مَّكْنُوْنٍ. لَّا يَمَسُّهٗٓ اِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُوْنَ (It is surely the Noble Qur'ān (recorded already) in a protected book [i.e. the Preserved Tablet] that is not touched except by the purified ones [the angels]....77-79) Verses [75-76] constituted oath and the current set of verses is the subject of the oath [*jawāb-ul-qasam*]. The Qur'ān is a noble and glorious Book. The verse refutes the assumption of the pagans that this Book has been forged by a human being or that [God forbid!] it is a speech inspired by the devil.

The phrase كِتٰبٍ مَّكْنُوْنٍ 'a protected book' refers to *lawḥ maḥfūz* [i.e. the Preserved Tablet]. لَّا يَمَسُّهٗٓ اِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُوْنَ (that is not touched except by the purified ones ...56:79). Two issues require clarification here. The commentators have different views about them, because the structure of verse 78 and 79 has two possibilities grammatically: The first possibility is that the phrase 'that is not touched except by the purified ones' is the qualification of the Preserved Tablet referred to in the previous verse. In this case, 'the purified ones' can refer only to angels, and the phrase 'not touched' cannot be taken in its literal sense of physical touch; it would rather mean 'being awre of'. The sense of the verse would be that no one is aware of the Preserved Tablet and its contents except the purified angels. (Qurṭubī) This interpretation is adopted in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān as well. The second possibility is that the phrase 'that is not touched except by the purified ones' is taken as a qualification of the Qur'ān referred to in the previous verse. In this case the word Qur'ān would refer to the scrolls or scripts in which it is written, and 'not touched, will remain in its literal sense of referring to physical touch by hand etc. The sense would be that the Script of the Qur'ān is not touched by anyone except by the purified angels who bring revelation to the Prophet ﷺ. Since this interpretation does not need to take the word 'touch' in its figurative sense, Qurṭubī and some other commentators have preferred this interpretation. Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى says, 'The best interpretation of verse [77 and 78] I have ever heard is what is mentioned in Sūrah 'Abas (80) verses [13-16]: فِيْ صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ مَّرْفُوْعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ بِاَيْدِيْ سَفَرَةٍ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ (It is [recorded] in those scripts [of the Preserved Tablet] that are honoured, exalted, purified, in the hands of those scribes who are honourable, righteous.)

The second issue that requires consideration in this verse is what is meant by the phrase 'the purified ones'. A large group of the Companions, their followers and leading authorities on Qur'ānic commentary think that the referent of 'the pure ones' are the angels who are purified of the dross and adulteration of sins, and who are innocent. This is the view of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ, Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ and of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالیٰ has also adopted this view .

Some of the commentators think that Qur'ān refers to the copy of the Holy Book that is in our hands, and the referent of the word '*mutahharūn*' ('purified ones) are people free from minor impurity and major impurity. Minor impurity means to be without *wuḍū'* and minor impurity can be cleansed by making *wuḍū'* or *tayammum* [cleaning with dust]. Major impurity refers to the state of impurity which is caused by sexual intercourse, lustful discharge of semen during sleep, and menstrual and postpartum discharges. *Ghusl* (having bath) is the only means of achieving purity from this state. This interpretation is placed on the text by 'Aṭā', Ṭā'ūs, Sālim and Muḥammad Bāqir رحمهم الله تعالیٰ . In this case, although verse "that is not touched except by the purified ones...56:79) is a declarative sentence, it is in fact used in the sense of prohibiting human beings to touch the Qur'ān without being free from the minor and major impurities: The person who wishes to touch the Qur'ān needs to be purified of the visible as well as the invisible impurities by taking *wuḍū'*, *tayammum* or *ghusl,* as required. Qurṭubī and Maẓharī prefer this interpretation.

In the incident of Sayyidnā 'Umar's ﷺ embracing Islam, we come across the part of the story where he asked his sister to give him the pages of the Qur'ān, she recited verse [79] of this Sūrah, refused to give him the pages and said 'only the pure ones can touch it'. As a result, he was forced to take a bath, and then recite the contents of the pages. This incident also lends support to the last interpretation. The versions of the Tradition that prohibit the impure people from touching the Qur'ān are put forward by some authorities to argue in favour of the last interpretation.

However, since Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Anas ﷺ and others have a different view about the interpretation of this verse, as mentioned above, many scholars did not base the prohibition of touching the Qur'ān without ablution on verse [79]. Rather, the prohibition is established by

the following Traditions:

Imām Mālik cites, as evidence, the Holy Prophet's letter in his Muwatta' which he wrote to 'Amr Ibn Hazm. It contains the following statement: لَايَمَسُّ الْقُرْآنَ إِلَّا طَاهِرٌ "Only a clean one may touch the Qur'ān". Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī gives the following references: Musnad of 'Abdurrazzāq, Ibn Abī Dāwūd and Ibn-ul-Mundhir, Ṭabarānī and Ibn Mardūyah record a Tradition on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: لَايَمَسُّ الْقُرْآنَ إِلَّا طَاهِرٌ (Only a clean one may touch the Qur'ān.)

Some Rulings about touching the Holy Qur'ān

(1) On the basis of the foregoing Prophetic Aḥādīth, the overwhelming majority of the 'Ummah and the four major schools concur that 'purity' is a condition for the permissibility of touching the Holy Qur'ān and it is not allowed to touch it in a state of impurity. It means that before touching the Holy Qur'ān, one must make sure that no *najāsah* (i.e. things declared by Sharī'ah as filth) is attached to one's hand, and that he or she is in the state of *wuḍū'* and is not in the state of *Janābah* (the state in which it is obligatory to take bath.) The divergence of interpretation referred to earlier is only in connection with whether or not verse [79] can be the basis of such a prohibition. Some jurists think that the verse as well as the relevant Traditions bear the same sense, hence they use them as supportive of each other in evidence of their ruling. Others, on account of divergence of interpretation among the Companions, exercised precaution in using the Qur'ānic text as evidence in support of their ruling. But because of the Traditions, they ruled that touching the Qur'ān without ablutions is impermissible. In sum, there are no differences in their rulings. The differences are only in supportive evidence of these rulings.

(2) If the Qur'ān is in a cover which is sewn or permanently attached to it in some way, it is not permitted - according to the four major schools - for an unclean person to touch it without ablutions. If however the Qur'ān is covered in something that is not permanently attached to it, an unclean person may, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, touch it without ablutions. However, according to Imāms Mālik and Shāfi'ī, an unclean person is not permitted to touch it before taking ablutions. [Maẓharī]

(3) If a person is wearing a garment, it is not lawful for him to touch the Qur'ān with his sleeves or skirt if he is unclean. However, he may touch it with a handkerchief or a sheet. [Mazharī]

(4) Scholars have ruled it which is proved by this very verse with grater force that a person in the state of *janābah* (sexual defilement) and a woman in the state of menstruation or postpartum bleeding cannot recite it, even from memory until bath has been taken, because if it is obligatory to honour the written letters of the Holy Qur'ān by touching them only in the state of purity, its spoken words deserve the same honour with greater importance. The requirement of this honour should have been that even in the state of minor impurity a person should not be allowed to recite the Holy Qur'ān. But Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and 'Alī ﷺ report that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the Qur'ān without *wuḍū'*. On this basis, the jurists have ruled that it is permissible to recite it without *wuḍū'*. (But in the case of major impurity the rule will remain intact.). [Mazharī]

أَفَبِهَٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنتُم مُّدْهِنُونَ (Is it this discourse that you take lightly,...56:81) The word مُدْهِنُونَ *mudhinun* is the plural of *mudhin*, being the active participle from إِدْهَان *idhan*, which literally means 'to apply or rub oil on the body'. When oil is applied or rubbed on the body, the muscles are relaxed, and parts of the body become soft and supple. By extension, the word is employed in the sense of showing flexibility and softness on inappropriate occasions. Hence, it is used in the sense of hypocrisy. In the current verse the word is used in the sense of hypocrisy and rejection of Allah's verses carelessly.

فَلَوْلَآ إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلْقُومَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَأَنتُمْ حِينَئِذٍ تَنظُرُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنكُمْ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَلَوْلَآ إِن كُنتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ تَرْجِعُونَهَآ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

(So why [do you] not [interfere] when the soul [of a dying person] reaches the throat, and you are watching? And We are closer to him than you, but you do not perceive. So, if you are not going to be recompensed [in the Hereafter for your deeds], then why do you not bring the soul back, if you are truthful?...56:83-87)

The preceding verses proved two facts through rational arguments and by swearing an oath by the falling stars: [1] that the Holy Qur'ān is

the word of Allah. Neither Jinn nor devil can ever tamper with it. Everything it contains is the truth; and [2] one of the most fundamental articles of faith enshrined in the Qur'ān is the Day of Resurrection and Reckoning. Towards the end of the passage, it is mentioned that the infidels and idolaters, in spite of clear arguments and evidence, reject life after death.

Their denial of Resurrection by the unbelievers, in a way, amounts to a claim that their lives and souls are under their own control, and they have a say in the matter of life and death. In order to refute this assumption, the above verses give the example of a dying person. When the soul reaches his throat, all of his near and dear ones look at him and express their desire that he may live longer, but none of them is able to intervene and save his life. All the people around him seem absolutely helpless. However, Allah is nearer to the dying person than the people around him even though they are unable to see Him. In other words, that is, He is nearer to him in terms of knowledge and power. He is fully aware of the person's inner and outer conditions and has complete control over him.

In short, it is not within people's power to get together and save a soul or life. Allah is nearer to a dying person than his soul or life. Allah has pre-designated a particular time for the soul to be separated from the body. None can avert it. In view of this graphic picture, the disbelievers are reminded that if they think that they cannot be resurrected after death, and they are too strong to come under Allah's grasp, then they must restore the soul when it has reached the throat and is about to depart from the body or it has already departed and died. If it is not possible to do any of these, how illogical or irrational it is for man to think that he can escape the Divine grasp and reject life after death!

فَاَمَّآ اِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ (So, in case he [the dying person] is from among those blessed with nearness...56:88). In the foregoing verses, it was made clear that one day the present world will come to an end. It was also testified that at the time of death the near and dear ones, friends and relatives, and doctors all stand helplessly around the dying person. Likewise, resurrection, reckoning, and reward and punishment, after account of deeds, are all a reality and certainty of the highest degree. At the commencement of the Sūrah, it was mentioned that there will be

three categories of the people in regard to their reward or punishment. The gist of this subject is again summarized here. If the dying person is among the Foremost believers, he will experience comfort, fragrance of happiness and a Garden of bliss. If he is not from the Foremost, but from the People of the Right hand, i.e. from the general body of believers, he will also experience the bounties and pleasures of Paradise. But if he is one of the People of the Left hand, the deniers and the deviant ones, then he will be in the blazing fire of Hell where he will be served with boiling water to drink.

At the end of this subject the Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِيْنِ (Indeed this is certainty in its true sense...56:95). None of the reward or punishment mentioned in the preceding verses is refutable because they are a dead certainty that has no room for any doubt or suspicion.

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيْمِ (So, proclaim the purity of the name of your Lord, the Magnificent...56:96). The Sūrah concludes with an imperative addressed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to pronounce the *tasbīḥ* of His Lord. This includes all kinds of *tasbiḥāt* (rememberances)- within *ṣalāh* and outside *ṣalāh*. Ṣalāh itself is sometimes referred to as *tasbīḥ*. Thus this verse enjoins to keep up the regular performance of *ṣalāh*.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd
(The Iron)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 29 verses and 4 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

سَبَّحَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِیْزُ الْحَكِیْمُ ﴿۱﴾ لَهٗ
مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ یُحْیٖ وَیُمِیْتُ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَیْءٍ
قَدِیْرٌ ﴿۲﴾ هُوَ الْاَوَّلُ وَالْاٰخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ
عَلِیْمٌ ﴿۳﴾ هُوَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِیْ سِتَّةِ اَیَّامٍ ثُمَّ
اسْتَوٰی عَلَی الْعَرْشِ ؕ یَعْلَمُ مَا یَلِجُ فِی الْاَرْضِ وَمَا یَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا
یَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَمَا یَعْرُجُ فِیْهَا ؕ وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ اَیْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِیْرٌ ﴿۴﴾ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَاِلَی اللّٰهِ
تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ﴿۵﴾ یُوْلِجُ الَّیْلَ فِی النَّهَارِ وَیُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِی الَّیْلِ ؕ
وَهُوَ عَلِیْمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿۶﴾

Allah's purity has been proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. [1] **To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and brings death, and He is Powerful to do every thing.** [2] **He is the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He is All-Knowing about every thing.** [3] **He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He positioned**

Himself on the Throne. He knows whatever goes into the earth and whatever comes out therefrom, and whatever descends from the sky, and whatever ascends thereto. And He is with you wherever you are, and Allah is watchful of whatever you do. [4] **To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and to Allah all matters are returned.** [5] **He makes the night enter into the day, and makes the day enter into the night, and He is All-Knowing about whatever lies in the hearts.** [6]

Some of the Merits of Sūrah Al-Hadid

It is recorded in Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasa'ī that Sayyidnā 'Irbāḍ Ibn Sāriyah ﵁ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to recite Al-Musabbihat before he went to sleep and said: "In them there is a verse that is more meritorious than a thousand verses." The collective name of the series Al-Musabbiḥāt refers to the following five Sūrahs: [1] Al-Ḥadīd; [2] Al-Ḥashar; [3] Aṣ-Ṣaff; [4] Jumu'ah; and [5] At-Taghābun. Having cited this Ḥadīth, Ibn Kathīr says that the best verse referred to in Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd is verse [3] هُوَالْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (He is the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He is All-Knowing about every thing....57:3] Among the five Sūrahs, the first three, namely Al-Ḥadīd, Al-Ḥashr and Aṣ-Ṣaff commence with the past perfect tense '*sabbaha*' [purity has been proclaimed] whilst the last two, namely Al-Jumu'ah and Al-Taghābun commence with the imperfect tense *yusabbiḥu* [purity is proclaimed]. This implies that the purity of Allah should be declared at all times, the past, the present and the future. [Maẓharī]

Remedy for Diabolical Whisperings

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵄ said that if the Satan casts an evil scruple in anyone's heart, and thus causes skepticism about Allah and the religion of truth, he should softly recite the following verse [3]: هُوَالْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden and He is All-Knowing about every thing.)

What is meant by Allah's being First and Last, and Manifest and Hidden? There are more than ten different interpretations of these attributes, and they are not contradictory. The scope is wide enough to accommodate all interpretations. The meaning of the attribute *al-awwal* [the First] is more or less fixed, signifying that ontologically there was

nothing before Allah, and that He created everything and He is the First Cause of all existent things. The attribute *Al-'ākhir* [the Last] means that He will exist even after everything will perish, as the following verse testifies: 'كُلُّ شَىۡءٍ هَالِكٌ اِلَّا وَجۡهَهٗ (Everything has to perish except His Countenance... [28:88] It should be noted that death or perishing covers two possibilities, either actual death or potential death. Therefore the verse means that all existent creatures will either actually perish on the Day of Judgment, or they may not actually perish, but potentially they could perish. They have the inherent capacity for death and destruction. Thus despite their being existent they may still be described as *ḥalik* or *fānī* [perishing]. As for instance. Paradise and Hell, and the righteous or unrighteous inmates entering them will not actually perish, but potentially they have the inherent capacity to perish. Only the Supreme Being of Allah is such that neither non-existence has ever occurred to Him, nor can death overtake Him. Thus Allah is *Al-'Ākhir* [the Last].

Imām Ghazālī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has another explanation. He interprets the attribute 'Ākhir [the Last] from the point of view of *ma'rifah* [Knowledge] in the sense that knowing Allah Ta'ālā is the ultimate goal which man hopes to achieve. He moves in the direction of this goal, passing on the way through all the different stages and stations until he attains the Divine Knowledge. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī].

The attribute *Az-zāhir* [the Manifest] signifies a Being whose manifestation is superior to everything. Since 'manifestation' is an offshoot of 'existence', and the Existence of Allah is First and superior to all existent entities, the Divine Manifestation surpasses the manifestation of all other beings. Nothing in this universe is more manifest than Him. The manifestation of His wisdom and His power is visible in every particle of this world.

The attribute *Al-bāṭin* [the Hidden] means that the accurate nature and essence of Allah's Being is hidden in the sense that the Divine Essence [*dhāt*] is beyond human perception. No intellect or thought can ever reach the accurate and Intrinsic Essence of Allah.

اے برتراز قیاس و گمان و خیال و وھم
وزھرچہ دیدہ ایم شنیدہ ایم وخواندہ ایم

He is far beyond any hypothesis, any guess, any, assumption, any imagination,

And who is far beyond whatever we have ever seen, heard or read about.

اے بروں از جملہ قال وقیلِ من
خاک بر فرق من و تمثیل من

He is beyond all our discussions and debates.

Whatever example I cite to explain Him is no more than a sheer failure.

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ اَيْنَمَا كُنْتُمْ (...And He is with you wherever you are, ...57:4) No man is able to comprehend the essential nature of Allah's company or His being with us, though it is absolutely true that He is with us, because no man can exist or do any work without it. The Divine Will [*mashiyyah*] and power is necessary for everything. Therefore, Allah is with every human being in every situation, at every place. Allah knows best!

Verses 7 - 11

اٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَاَنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُّسْتَخْلَفِيْنَ فِيْهِ ط فَالَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَاَنْفَقُوْا لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ ج
وَالرَّسُوْلُ يَدْعُوْكُمْ لِتُؤْمِنُوْا بِرَبِّكُمْ وَقَدْ اَخَذَ مِيْثَاقَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُنَزِّلُ عَلٰى عَبْدِهٖٓ اٰيٰتٍ ۢ بَيِّنٰتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنَ
الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ط وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُمْ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ اَلَّا
تُنْفِقُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَلِلّٰهِ مِيْرَاثُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ط لَا يَسْتَوِيْ
مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ اَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَاتَلَ ط اُولٰٓئِكَ اَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِّنَ
الَّذِيْنَ اَنْفَقُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدُ وَقَاتَلُوْا ط وَكُلًّا وَّعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْحُسْنٰى ط وَاللّٰهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿١٠﴾ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ يُقْرِضُ اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا
فَيُضٰعِفَهٗ لَهٗ وَلَهٗٓ اَجْرٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾

Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend out of that (wealth) in which He has appointed you as

deputies.[1] So, for those of you who have believed and spent (in Allah's way), there is a big reward. [7] And what is wrong with you that you do not believe in Allah, while the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord, and He has taken your covenant, if you are believers? [8] He is the One who reveals clear verses to His slave, so that He brings you out from layers of darkness towards the light. And to you, indeed, Allah is Very-Kind, Very-Merciful. [9] And what is wrong with you that you should not spend in the way of Allah, while to Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth? Those who spent before the Conquest (of Makkah), and fought (in Allah's way), are not at par (with others). Those are much greater in rank than those who spent later and fought, though Allah has promised the good (reward) for each. And Allah is well aware of what you do. [10] Who is the one who advances a loan, a good loan, to Allah so that He multiplies it for him, and he may have a noble reward? [11]

Ordering Faith

وَقَدْ اَخَذَ مِيْثَاقَكُمْ (...and He has taken your covenant ....57:8) This could refer to the covenant taken in *'azal'* (pre-eternity). According to verses 172-174 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf, Allah gathered all the souls even before they took the form of their existence, and took the covenant of '*alast*' [the pre-eternal covenant]. He asked them: اَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ("Am I not your Lord?")

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[1] The original word used in the text is '*mustakhlafin*' which has two meanings: 'deputies' and 'successors'. Taken in the first meaning, the verse indicates that the wealth held by human beings originally belongs to Allah, but He has made them His deputies or representatives to use it according to His directions. Although He has allowed them to use it for their own benefit, it should always be subject to the rules prescribed by Him in Shari'ah. Once it is believed that one is not the absolute owner of this wealth, it should not be difficult for him to spend according to the command of its absolute Owner. This is the interpretation of the verse according to the majority of commentators. However, some other exegetes have taken the word '*mustakhlafin*' in the sense of 'successors'. In this case the verse reminds us that whatever wealth we have in our hands today has reached us from other people who owned it before us. We have succeeded them in its ownership, and ultimately it will be passed on to some others through any mode of transfer including inheritance. All kinds of wealth are thus in transit, moving from one person to another. Therefore, one should not hesitate in spending it in Allah's way, because it has to be passed on to some others in any case. **(Muhammad Taqi Usmani)**

They replied: بَلٰى (Of course You are, we affirm). Another possibility is that this covenant could refer to the pledge taken from the previous prophets and their followers to believe in the final Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and support him. This covenant is mentioned by the Holy Qur'ān in the following words:

ثُمَّ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهٖ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهٗ قَالَ ءَاَقْرَرْتُمْ وَاَخَذْتُمْ عَلٰى ذٰلِكُمْ اِصْرِىْ قَالُوْٓا اَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوْا وَاَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ.

> "...then comes to you a messenger verifying what is with you; you shall have to believe in him and you shall have to support him. He said: 'Do you affirm and accept my covenant in this respect?' They said: 'We affirm.' He said: 'Then, bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.'" (3:81)

اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ (...if you are believers - 57:8). A question may arise here: In the earlier part of this very verse [8], the infidels and idolaters were reprimanded in the following words, "And what is wrong with you that you do not believe in Allah" This goes to show that the addressees of this phrase are 'non-believers', then how is it appropriate to say 'if you are believers'?

The answer to this question is that the unbelievers did not deny the existence of the Creator. In point of fact, they claimed to believe in God, and thus they used to say مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ اِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُوْنَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ زُلْفٰى (We only worship them [the idols] that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position....39:3) In this context, the concluding phrase of verse [8] implies that 'If your claim [that you believe in God] is true, then go about the perfect and right way in "believing in God" which is not only to believe in God but also to believe in His Messenger.

وَلِلّٰهِ مِيْرَاثُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ (...while to Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth?....57:10) The word *mīrāth* [inheritance, heritage] is the process by which the assets of a deceased person pass to the living heirs and beneficiaries. This transfer of cwnership takes place automatically by virtue of the law of Sharī'ah; the deceased has no choice in the matter. On this occasion, Allah has described the ownership of heaven and earth by the expression *mīrāth* [inheritance, heritage] presumably because all those assets deemed to be owned by men will ultimately return to Allah, no matter whether men like it or not. Although

the Real Owner and Master of the heavens and the earth is Allah, He transferred part-ownership of things to man by His grace, but on the Day of Judgment, even this outward and partial ownership will no longer remain in the hands of anyone. At that stage, all sorts of ownership, apparent and real, outward and inward, will belong to none but Allah. Therefore, if those who are apparently owners of some wealth today spend it in Allah's way, they will receive its compensation in the Hereafter, and thus anything spent in the way of Allah will become the eternal property of the spender.

It is recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﵁ that one day a goat was slaughtered. Most of it was distributed among other people, except for a foreleg. The Holy Prophet ﷺ wanted to know from her whether any part of it was spared from distribution. She said 'yes, a foreleg'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "The entire goat is spared, except this foreleg." He meant that the entire goat was spent in the way of Allah and thus it was spared for their benefit in the Hereafter, because it would remain with Allah for compensation. On the contrary, there would be no compensation for the foreleg that had been kept for later use, because that would perish here. [Maẓharī]

لَايَسْتَوِىْ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ اَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَاتَلَ (...Those who spent before the Conquest [of Makkah], and fought [in Allah's way], are not at par [with others]. ...10) It means that there are two types of people who spend wealth in the way of Allah: [1] those who embraced Islam before the victory of Makkah and, being believers, spent their wealth in the cause of Allah; [2] those who participated in *jihād* after the conquest of Makkah and spent their wealth in Allah's way. The two types are not equal in the sight of Allah. They differ in status and reward. The first category is described as higher in status and reward than the second category who will receive reward commensurate with their status.

Conquest of Makkah: The Dividing Line in Determining the Status of the noble Companions ﵃

The verse declares the Conquest of Makkah as the dividing line in determining the status of the two categories of the noble Companions, presumably because the political conditions of Makkah before the Conquest were very bleak and difficult for Muslims. In terms of extrinsic causes, the survival of Muslims was threatened and their progress was

doubted. The people at large could not rule out the possibility that, like other movements, Islam would soon erode and suffer a natural attrition or death. Wise men of the world would not join a movement where there was a fear of defeat or annihilation. They wait for results. When the movement shows signs of success, they join it. Some people, though think that it is the truth, do not pluck courage to join it for fear of persecution and on account of their own weaknesses. But when the courageous and determined people are convinced about the veracity of a theory or belief system, they accept it instantly. They do not bother about victory or defeat, and smaller or larger membership of the movement does not concern them.

The people, who embraced Islam before conquest of Makkah, were witnessing the small number and political weakness of the Muslims and the consequent hardships. Muslims were very small in number and they were weak, on account of which the pagans persecuted them. Especially in the early days of Islam, disclosing one's faith in Islam would amount to losing his life, hearth and home. It is obvious that those who put their lives at stake by embracing Islam in such circumstances, and offered their lives and wealth for the help of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and for the service of Islam had such a high level of sincerity in their faith and practice that no other people can be compared to them.

Gradually, conditions changed. Muslims grew in power, so much so that eventually Makkah was conquered, after which Islam spread tremendously throughout the Arab world, people embraced the religion of Allah en masse [as the Qur'ān says: يَدۡخُلُوۡنَ فِیۡ دِیۡنِ اللّٰهِ اَفۡوَاجًا (...people entering Allah's [approved] religion in multitudes) [110:2] This happened because many people were convinced of the veracity of Islam, but reluctant to embrace it publicly on account of their own weaknesses, owing to the might and power of the opposition and for fear of their persecution. These hurdles were now out of their way, and they started entering the fold of Islam in multitudes.

Although such people too are shown respect and honour by this verse, and forgiveness and mercy is promised to them, it has been made clear that their status cannot be equal to those who, due to their unshaken faith and resolute courage, declared their Islam despite all apprehensions of extreme hardships and persecution, and offered themselves to Islam in

very difficult times.

Allah promises Paradise and Forgiveness to all Noble Ṣaḥābah ﷺ

In the current set of verses, a distinction is drawn between the different categories of the noble Ṣaḥābah (Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but towards the end of verse 10 it is declared that وَكُلًّا وَّعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْحُسْنٰى (...though Allah has promised the good [reward] for each ....57:10). The word *ḥusnā* [good reward] means that the promise of Paradise and forgiveness extends to all the noble Companions, whether they spent and fought before or after the Conquest. This includes almost the entire concourse of Companions, because it is hardly conceivable that, despite being Muslims, some of them might have not spent anything in Allah's way or not participated against the hostile foes of Islam. Thus the Qur'ānic proclamation of Paradise and forgiveness is for the general body of Companions.

Ibn Ḥazm رحمه الله تعالىٰ says that the meaning of verse [10] becomes even clearer when we append to it verses [101-102] of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنٰى أُولٰٓئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُوْنَ. لَايَسْمَعُوْنَ حَسِيْسَهَا وَهُمْ فِيْمَا اشْتَهَتْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ خٰلِدُوْنَ (Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept far away from it (i.e. from the Hell). They will not hear the slightest of its sound, and they will remain forever in what their selves desire.) [21:101-102].

The verses under comment contain the phrase كُلًّا وَّعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْحُسْنٰى (..though Allah has promised the good (reward) for each ...[57:10] In verses [21:101-102], Allah Ta'ālā proclaims that those who have received the good news of reward [*al-ḥusnā*] will be kept far away from Hell. The Qur'ān thus guarantees that all the Companions, whether from the first category or from the second one, are immune from Hell. Even if someone from them would commit a sin, he will not persist in it, but he will either repent from it, or will be forgiven for it because of the blessed company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ he enjoyed, his help offered to him, the good deeds he performed and many services he rendered to Islam. Therefore, he would not leave this world unless his sins would be forgiven and his account of deeds would have been clear. It is also possible that worldly calamities would serve as an expiation to wipe out his shortcomings or painful experience in the grave or *'Alam-ul-barzakh* will expiate his

faults.

There are Traditions that report torment for some of the noble Companions, but that does not refer to the torture of the Hereafter or punishment of the Hell. It refers to the chastisement of the grave or *'Alam-ul-barzakh*. It would not be far-fetched to assume that if a Companion committed a sin and did not find an opportunity to repent and cleanse himself, he would be purified by infliction of the grave, so that no chastisement will be inflicted on him in the Hereafter.

The Status of the Noble Ṣaḥābah in the light of Qur'ān and Sunnah, not in terms of Historical Narratives

The Noble Ṣaḥābah are not like the general body of the Muslim Community. They are a medium between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the general body of the Muslim Community. Without them neither the Qur'ān nor its meaning or the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ can reach the Ummah. Therefore, they enjoy a special status in Islam. The status of the blessed Companions cannot be recognized by the historical narrations that are a mixture of right and wrong. It is rather recognized in the light of Qur'ān and Sunnah.

If any of them slips up, in most cases it would not exceed a *khaṭa' ijtihādī* or error in judgement, not a sin or willful transgression of law. In fact, according to the clear text of a Prophetic Tradition, if a *mujtahid* were to slip up or err in his judgement, he still receives one reward. Even if they committed a sin, it would be counted as nil in view of their life-long righteous deeds, and supporting the Holy Prophet ﷺ and Islam. The reverence and awe of Allah was engrossed in their hearts to such a high degree that they would shudder at the very thought of ordinary sins and would repent forthwith. As a result, they would inflict punishment on themselves. Some would tie themselves to the column of the mosque, and as long as they are not certain that their sins would be forgiven they would remain tied.

In addition, each one of them performed so many righteous deeds that they could expiate for their sins. Moreover, Allah has announced a general amnesty for their sins in this and other verses. He not only pardoned their sins, but also proclaimed رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ (Allah is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him. 98:8). It is

absolutely forbidden to speak ill of them or taunt them or revile them because of their mutual differences and disagreements. According to a Prophetic Tradition, doing so is incurring Allah's curse and putting one's own faith in jeopardy.

Nowadays, on the basis of false and weak historical narratives some writers have made the noble and blessed Companions the target of taunts and reproach. First of all, the basis on which the historical narratives are founded are unreliable and questionable. Even if it is taken for granted that they have some historical substance, they are clearly in conflict with Qur'ān and Sunnah. Hence, they must be refuted in the strongest terms possible. The original statement stands: The noble and blessed Companions are forgiven and pardoned.

Unanimous Belief of the Ummah regarding the Noble Ṣaḥābah

It is obligatory on Muslims to show respect and honour to all the Companions, to love them and praise them. It is likewise imperative to observe silence regarding their mutual differences and disagreements. It is compulsory to abstain from making any of them the target of accusations and reproach. All texts of Islamic beliefs make plain this consensual belief of the Ummah. Imām Aḥmad رحمه الله تعالىٰ has written a monograph on the subject which reached us on the authority of Iṣṭakhrī. A section of it partly reads:

لَايَجُوْزُ لِاَحَدٍ اَنْ يَّذْكُرَ شَيْئًا مِّنْ مَّسَاوِيهِم وَلَا يَطْعَنُ عَلٰى اَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ بِعَيْبٍ وَلَا نَقْصٍ فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذٰلِكَ وَجَبَ تَأْدِيْبُهٗ.

"It is not lawful for anyone to speak ill of the Companions, or cast aspersions against them, or find fault with them. Whoever does so should be punished." [Sharḥ-ul-'Aqīdah Al-Wāsiṭiyyah, known as Ad-Durrah Al-Mudi'ah]

Ibn Taimiyyah in his As-Ṣārim-ul-Maslūl has cited many verses of the Qur'ān and Prophetic Traditions regarding the virtues and characteristics of the noble Companions, after which he concludes:

وَهٰذَا مِمَّا لَا نَعْلَمُ فِيْهِ خِلَافًا بَيْنَ اَهْلِ الْفِقْهِ وَالْعِلْمِ مِنْ اَصْحَابِ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَالتَّابِعِيْنَ لَهُمْ بِاِحْسَانٍ وَسَائِرِ اَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ فَاِنَّهُمْ مُجْمِعُوْنَ عَلٰى اَنَّ الْوَاجِبَ الثَّنَاءُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَالْاِسْتِغْفَارُ لَهُمْ وَالتَّرَحُّمُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَالتَّرَضِّىْ عَنْهُمْ وَاعْتِقَادُ مَحَبَّتِهِمْ وَمُوَالَاتِهِمْ وَعُقُوْبَةُ مَنْ اَسَاءَ فِيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ.

"As far as we know, there is no difference of opinion in this issue among the scholars and the jurists from Companions and their followers, and the Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah. There is consensus of the Ummah that it is imperative to praise the Companions, to seek forgiveness for them, to remember them with compassion and pleasure, and to express love and friendship for them. Anyone who dishonours them should be punished."

Ibn Taimiyyah confirms, in Sharḥ-ul-'Aqīdah Al-Wāsiṭiyyah, the consensual belief of the *Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah* of the entire Ummah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ relating to the mutual disagreement of the Companions:

وَيُمْسِكُوْنَ عَمَّا شَجَرَ بَيْنَ الصَّحَابَةِ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ هٰذِهِ الْآثَارُ الْمَرْوِيَّةُ فِيْ مَسَاوِيْهِمْ مِنْهَا مَاهُوَ كِذْبٌ وَّ مِنْهَا مَازِيْدَ فِيْهَا وَنُقِصَ وَغُيِّرَ وَجْهُهُ وَالصَّحِيْحُ مِنْهُ هُمْ فِيْهِ مَعْذُوْرُوْنَ إِمَّا مُجْتَهِدُوْنَ مُصِيْبُوْنَ وَاما مُجْتَهِدُوْنَ مُخْطِئُوْنَ، وَهُمْ مَعَ ذٰلِكَ لَايَعْتَقِدُوْنَ اَنَّ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنَ الصَّحَابَةِ مَعْصُوْمٌ مِّنْ كَبَائِرِ الْإِثْمِ وَصَغَائِرِهٖ بَلْ يَجُوْزُ عَلَيْهِمُ الذُّنُوْبُ فِي الْجُمْلَةِ وَلَهُمْ مِّنَ الْفَضَائِلِ وَالسَّوَابِقِ مَايُوْجِبُ مَغْفِرَةَ مَا يَصْدُرُ مِنْهُمْ حَتّٰى اَنَّهُمْ يُغْفَرُلَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ مَالاَ يُغْفَرُ لِمَنْ بَعْدَهُمْ.

"*Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah* observe silence relating to matters in which the noble Companions mutually disagreed. According to them, the position of the narratives that find fault with them may be summarized as follows: Some of them are absolutely false whilst others have been distorted or perverted. Reports that are authentic have a plausible explanation, (because they did what they did on the basis of '*ijtihād*' which Sharī'ah recognizes). If they reached the right conclusion (by exercising reasoning), they would be rewarded doubly; and if they arrived at an incorrect conclusion (by exerting effort to derive the law on an issue by expending all the available means of interpreting at the jurist's disposal and by taking into account all the legal evidences related to the issue,) they are still excused (and deserve a single reward). Despite this situation, the Ummah does not believe that every Companion is innocent, infallible or sinless. In fact, it is possible for them to commit sins - major or minor, but their virtues and great services to Islam are such that they demand forgiveness. The scope of their forgiveness and pardon would be so wide that the later members of the Ummah would not have such a wide scope."

A detailed account of the status of the sahabah is given in Sūrah Al-Fatḥ under verse [29]. I have written a book entitled *maqām-e-ṣaḥābah*

in which I have collected relevant Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic Traditions pertaining to the status of the Companions. This book has already been published. The Ummah is unanimous on the point that all the blessed Companions are impartial, unbiased, reliable and worthy of confidence. The book deals elaborately with their disagreements and the civil wars that took place among them. It deals with the status of the historical narratives and their true place in critical study. Some of these issues to the degree necessary have been included in the commentary of Sūrah Muḥammad and Sūrah Al-Fatḥ. Please refer to the relevant sections there. Allah's help is sought and on Him is our reliance!

Verses 12 - 19

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ يَسْعٰى نُوْرُهُمْ بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَ
بِاَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرٰىكُمُ الْيَوْمَ جَنّٰتٌ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ
فِيْهَا ط ذٰلِكَ هُوَالْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿١٢﴾ يَوْمَ يَقُوْلُ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقٰتُ
لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا انْظُرُوْنَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُّوْرِكُمْ ج قِيْلَ ارْجِعُوْا وَرَآءَكُمْ
فَالْتَمِسُوْا نُوْرًا ط فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِسُوْرٍ لَّهٗ بَابٌ ط بَاطِنُهٗ فِيْهِ الرَّحْمَةُ
وَظَاهِرُهٗ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ ﴿١٣﴾ يُنَادُوْنَهُمْ اَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَّعَكُمْ ط قَالُوْا
بَلٰى وَلٰكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْاَمَانِيُّ
حَتّٰى جَآءَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ وَغَرَّكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ الْغَرُوْرُ ﴿١٤﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ
مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَّلَا مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ط مَاْوٰىكُمُ النَّارُ ط هِىَ مَوْلٰىكُمْ ط
وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٥﴾ اَلَمْ يَاْنِ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوْبُهُمْ
لِذِكْرِاللّٰهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لا وَلَا يَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ
مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْاَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ط وَكَثِيْرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ
﴿١٦﴾ اِعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ط قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ اِنَّ الْمُصَّدِّقِيْنَ وَالْمُصَّدِّقٰتِ وَاَقْرَضُوا اللّٰهَ

قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُّضٰعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ اَجْرٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿۱۸﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ
وَرُسُلِهٖٓ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الصِّدِّيْقُوْنَ ۖ وَالشُّهَدَآءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۭ لَهُمْ
اَجْرُهُمْ وَنُوْرُهُمْ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ
الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿۱۹﴾

On the Day when you will see the believing men and the believing women, their light proceeding in front of them and to their right hands, (it will be said to them,) "Good news for you today! Gardens beneath which rivers flow, to live therein for ever! That is the great achievement, [12] the Day when the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believe, "Wait for us, so that we may have a share from your light.", it will be said (to them), "Go back to your rear, and search for light." Then a wall will be placed between them, which will have a gate. In its inner side, there will be the divine mercy, while towards its outer side, there will be the divine punishment. [13] They (the hypocrites) will call out to them (the believers), "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, (you were,) but you led your souls to a wrong way, and kept waiting (for an evil end to the Muslims), and remained in doubt, and were deluded by fancies, until Allah's command came to pass, and you were deceived about Allah by the Big Deceiver (Iblīs). [14] So, no ransom will be accepted from you today, nor from those who disbelieved (openly). Your abode is the Fire, and it is an evil end." [15] Has the time not yet come for those who believe that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of Allah and for the truth that has descended (through revelation)? And they must not be like those to whom the Book was given before, but a long period passed on them (in which they did not repent), therefore their hearts became hard, while many of them were sinners. [16] Know well that Allah revives the land after its death. We have made the signs clear for you, so that you may understand. [17] Surely those men who give *ṣadaqah* (charity) and those women who give *ṣadaqah* and have advanced a good loan to Allah, for them it will be multiplied, and for them there is a noble reward. [18] And those who believed in Allah and His Messengers, it is they who are the *ṣiddīqs* (the most righteous after prophets) and the *shuhadā'*

(martyrs) in the sight of your Lord. For them shall be their reward and their light. And those who disbelieved and rejected Our verses – those are the people of the Hell. [19]

The Believers will be awarded Light on the Day of Resurrection

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ يَسْعٰى نُوْرُهُمْ بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَ بِاَيْمَانِهِمْ (On the Day when you will see the believing men and the believing women, their light proceeding in front of them and to their right hands,....57:12) 'The day' refers to the 'Day of Resurrection'. The fact of 'light running before them' will take place just prior to people's passing over the bridge of *sirat*. The details are given in a Tradition reported by Sayyidnā Abū Umāmah Bāhilī ﷺ. Ibn Kathīr has cited it on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim. The Tradition is lengthy. It recounts that Sayyidnā Abū Umāmah Bāhilī ﷺ attended a funeral in Damascus. When it was over, he reminded people about death, the grave, the Resurrection and the Hereafter. A few of the statements are reproduced below in translation:

"Then you will be transferred from the graves to the plane of gathering where there will be different stages and spots to stand or wait. Then there will come a stage when some faces will brighten up and others will be darkened by the Divine command. Then there will come a stage when people - believers and non-believers - all will assemble on the Plane of Gathering. An intense darkness will prevail and nobody will be able to see anything. Thereafter light will be distributed. (Another report of Ibn Abī Ḥātim, reported by Ibn Kathir, which he narrates on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ says that each believer will receive the light commensurate with his deeds; some will have light as large as a mountain, some as a date tree, some as big as the height of a man. The least among them will have a light as big as his index finger; it will lit at times and extinguished at other times.) Sayyidnā Abū Umāmah Bāhilī ﷺ then went on to say that the hypocrites and the infidels would not receive any light. The Holy Qur'ān exemplifies it thus:

اَوْ كَظُلُمٰتٍ فِىْ بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَّغْشٰهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهٖ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهٖ سَحَابٌ ظُلُمٰتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ اِذَآ اَخْرَجَ يَدَهٗ لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرٰىهَا وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ نُوْرًا فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ نُّوْرٍ

'or their deeds are like layers of darkness in a vast deep sea overwhelmed by a wave, above which there is another wave–layers of darkness, one above the other. When one puts forth his hand, he can hardly see it. And the one to whom Allah does not give light can have no light at all." (24:40)

From this narration, it is learnt that the infidels and the hypocrites

will be deprived of the light from the very beginning point where Allah will distribute light to the believing men and women after the intensely dark spot. But Ṭabrānī reports a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

> "Allah will send light to every believer at the bridge, and also to every hypocrite, but when the hypocrites reach the bridge, their light will be snatched away."(Ibn Kathīr)

This shows that the hypocrites will initially receive light, but when they reach the bridge, they will be deprived of it. Be that as it may, whether they will be deprived of light initially or it will extinguished later on after receiving it at an earlier stage, they will plead to the believers: 'Please wait for us! Let us take advantage of your light, because we were with you in the world when we performed *ṣalāh*, paid *zakāh*, performed *Ḥajj* and even participated in *jihād* expeditions?' The request will be declined. The rejoinder to this plea is forthcoming in full details. It is in keeping with the characteristic of the hypocrites that they should first be shown the light, then it should be extinguished to leave them in total darkness, just as they behaved deceitfully in the world, as the Qur'ān states:

يُخٰدِعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ

> Surely, the hypocrites [try to] deceive Allah while He is the One who leaves them in deception ... [4:142]

Imām Baghawī says that 'deception' here means that first the light will be sent to them, but it will be snatched away from them just in the nick of time when they will be needing it most crucially. At that crucial moment, the believers too will fear lest their light should be snatched away. As a result, they would implore thus:

يَوْمَ لَايُخْزِى اللّٰهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ نُوْرُهُمْ يَسْعٰى بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَبِاَيْمَانِهِمْ
يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَآ اَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُوْرَنَا وَاغْفِرْلَنَا اِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ.

> "...on the Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him. Their light will run before them and to their right hands. They will say, "Our Lord, perfect for us our light, and forgive us. Indeed you are powerful over every thing." [66:8] (Maẓharī)

Muslim, Aḥmad and Darquṭnī record on the authority of Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullah the Prophetic Ḥadīth that at first, light will be given

to both believers and hypocrites, but when the latter would reach the bridge, it will be snatched away from the hypocrites.

Maẓharī reconciles the two versions thus: There are two types of hypocrites, one of whom appeared in the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This type will be treated like the infidels. The non-believers will not receive light from the very outset. Likewise, the hypocrites of the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ will be deprived of the light from the very outset. The second type of hypocrites appeared after the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but they cannot be so called in the true sense of the word because revelation ended with the departure of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and without definitive evidence on the basis of revelation no one can be labeled, identified or classified as a *munāfiq* [hypocrite]. The *munāfiq* manifests the form of a man of faith in his outward practice, but his inner dimension is completely devoid of faith and belief. There is no way of knowing this for common people. However, Allah is fully aware of his inner and outer dimensions. He will treat each one accordingly. The *munāfiqs* will be shown the light in the beginning, but when they would arrive at the bridge, their light will be put out and they will be groping in total darkness.

In this category of *munāfiqs* fall those people of this Ummah who distort the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth twisting their meanings to suit their own purposes. We seek Allah's refuge from it.

Causes of Light and Darkness on the Plane of Gathering

Tafsīr Maẓharī, on this occasion, has, on the basis of Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, described the causes of light and darkness on the Plane of Gathering. Below, we reproduce those causes the knowledge of which is more important than pure academic research, in the hope that Allah will grant us light:

[1] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Give glad tidings to those who go to the mosque in the darkness of night that they will receive perfect light on the Day of Judgment." (Reported by Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī from Buraidah ؓ, and Ibn Mājah from Anas ؓ. This Ḥadīth is also reported by Sahl Ibn Sa'd, Zaid Ibn Harithah, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Harithah Ibn Wahb, Abū 'Umamah, Abu-ad-Dardā', Abū Mūsā, Abū Hurairah, 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین)

[2] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

مَنْ حَافَظَ عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا وَّبُرْهَانًا وَّنَجَاةً يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يُحَافِظْ عَلَيْهَا لَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُ نُورًا وَّلَا بُرْهَانًا وَّلَا نَجَاةً وَّكَانَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَعَ قَارُوْن وَهَامَانَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ.

"He who takes care of his five daily prayers [that is, performs them regularly fulfilling all their essentials], it will serve as light, proof and salvation for him on the Day of Judgement. He who fails to take care of it, there will be no light, nor proof or salvation for him on the Day of Judgement. The latter will be in the company of Qārūn, Hāmān and Fir'aun."

(Reported by Aḥmad and Ṭabarānī from Ibn 'Umar ؓ)

[3] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever recites Sūrah Al-Kahf, there will be so much of light for him on the Day of Judgement that it will spread from his place to Makkah." In another narration, "Whoever recites Sūrah Al-Kahf on a Friday, light will extend from his feet to the heights of the heaven on the Day of Judgment." (Reported by Ṭabarānī from Abū Sa'īd ؓ)

[4] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever recites just a single verse of the Qur'ān, it will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement." (Reported by Aḥmad from Abū Hurairah ؓ)

[5] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever sends *ṣalāh* (*durūd*) to me, it shall be the cause of light on the Bridge of Ṣirāt." (Reported by Dailamī from Abū Hurairah ؓ)

[6] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said when detailing the rules of Ḥajj: "The hair, that falls on the ground at the time of shaving it when coming out of the state of *iḥrām*, will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement" (Ṭabarānī from 'Ubādah Ibn samit ؓ)

[7] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Stoning the *jamarāt* in Minā will be a light on the Day of Judgement." (Musnad of Bazzār from Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ)

[8] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He whose hair turns gray in Islam, it will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement." (Ṭabarānī, with a good chain, from Abū Hurairah ؓ)

[9] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who shoots even one arrow in

Allah's way while fighting in *jihād*, it will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement." (Bazzār with a good chain from Abū Hurairah ﷺ)

[10] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who remembers Allah in the marketplace will receive light for every strand of hair on the Day of Judgement." (Baihaqī in Shu'ab-ul-Īmān with an interrupted chain from Ibn 'Umar ﷺ)

[11] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who alleviates the calamity of a Muslim, Allah will create two compartments of light for him at the bridge which will brighten up a whole world. No one besides Allah knows its number." (Ṭabarānī from Abū Hurairah ﷺ)

[12] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظُّلْمَ فَإِنَّهُ هُوَ الظُّلُمٰتُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ "Beware of *ẓulm* [injustice] because that will yield *zulumāt* [layers of darkness] on the Day of Judgement." (Bukhārī and Muslim from Ibn 'Umar ﷺ, Muslim from Jābir ﷺ and Ḥakim from Abū Hurairah ﷺ and Ibn 'Umar, and Ṭabarānī from Ibn Ziyad ﷺ).

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنٰفِقُونَ وَالْمُنٰفِقٰتُ لِلَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا انْظُرُونَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُّورِكُمْ (...the Day when the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believe, "Wait for us, so that we may have a share from your light...(57:13) The meaning is self-evident.

قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَآءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا (...it will be said [to them], "Go back to your rear, and search for light ....57:13) This reply will be given by either the believers, or by the angels. [Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah]

فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِسُورٍ لَّهُ بَابٌ ۭ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ (...Then a wall will be placed between them, which will have a gate. In its inner side, there will be the Divine mercy, while towards its outer side, there will be the Divine punishment...57:13). Having received the reply from either the believers or the angels, the hypocrites will return to the place where the light was distributed. They will find nothing there, so they will attempt to go back to the believers but in the meantime a wall will be set up between the hypocrites and the believers. As a result, the hypocrites will be separated from the believers and will not be able to reach them. They will be left in complete darkness. On the side of the believers there will be Allah's mercy while on the side of the hypocrites there will be chastisement.

Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī cites Ibn Zaid's view that this wall refers to A'rāf,

which will be a barrier between the believers and the hypocrites. Other commentators express the view that the wall is not the barrier of A'rāf, but it is some other wall or barrier. The door in the wall could serve one of two purposes: [1] It will be a way through which the believers and the hypocrites will communicate with one another; or [2] all the believers will pass through this door and then sealed off permanently.

Special Note

In the matter of light, the infidels are not mentioned anywhere, because in their case there is no question of having such a light. The hypocrites are, however, mentioned and there are two narrations concerning them: [1] That they will not receive light at all from the outset; or [2] They will receive it at first, but when they arrive at the Bridge of *Ṣirāṭ*, it will be extinguished. A wall will be erected as a barrier between them and the believers. This goes to show that only the believers will cross the Bridge of *Ṣirāṭ* from above the Hell. The infidels and pagans will not pass through the Bridge. They will be pushed into the Fire direct through the doors of Hell. The sinful believers, who will be kept in the Hell for a while to be cleansed of their sins, will fall into the Hell while crossing the Bridge. The rest of the believers will cross the bridge safely and enter Paradise, as explicitly stated by Shah 'Abdul-Qādir Dehlawī رحمه الله تعالىٰ and supported by Durr. Allah knows best!

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ (Has the time not yet come for those who believe that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of Allah and for the truth that has descended [through revelation]?...57:16) The phrase *khushū'-ul-qalb* means 'for the heart to soften; to be receptive to advice; to be obedient; to submit'. [Ibn Kathīr] In the Qur'ānic context, it implies 'a complete willingness to yield to the Divine injunctions, or the Divine imperatives and prohibitions without allowing any laxity in following them. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

This verse admonishes the believers. Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما reports that some of the believers were found to be lacking in firmness, and somewhat laziness was felt in their practices. So this verse was revealed. Imām A'mash رحمه الله تعالىٰ said: After settling down in Madīnah, the blessed Companions experienced socio-economic comfort and prosperity; as a result some of them relaxed in exerting their efforts to do good works as they used to do previously. Thus this verse was revealed.

[Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ's narration also carries the additional information that this admonitory verse was revealed thirteen years after the revelation had started. [Recorded by Ibn Abī Ḥātim] Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ narrates that this admonitory verse was revealed four years after they had embraced Islam to administer this mild reproof. Allah knows best!

In any case, the Muslims are cautioned in this verse that they should prepare themselves to turn to Allah totally and completely, and act upon the teachings of their religion. All actions revolve around *khushū'-ul-qalb* Sayyidnā Shaddād Ibn Aws ﷺ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The first thing that will be taken away from the people will be their humility or humbleness [*khushū'*]." [Ibn Kathīr]

Is every Believer a 'Ṣiddīq' and a 'Shahīd'?

وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖٓ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الصِّدِّيْقُوْنَ ۖ وَالشُّهَدَآءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ "And those who believed in Allah and His messengers, it is they who are the *ṣiddīqs* [the most righteous] and the *shuhadā'* (martyrs) in the sight of your Lord. ....57:19) This verse indicates that every 'believer' is a 'Ṣiddīq' and a 'Shahīd'. On the basis of this verse Qatādah and 'Amr Ibn Maimūn maintain that anyone who believes in Allah and His Messenger is a 'Ṣiddīq' and a 'Shahīd'. Ibn Jarīr reports that Sayyidnā Bara' Ibn 'Āzib ﷺ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: مُؤْمِنُوْا اُمَّتِیْ شُهَدَآءُ "The believers of my Ummah are all Shahīds (martyrs)." In support of this, he recited the current verse.

Ibn Abī Ḥātim reports that Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ narrates that one day some of the Companions had gathered around him, and he stated كُلُّكُمْ صِدِّيْقٌ وَّشَهِيْدٌ "Each one of you is a 'Ṣiddīq' and a 'Shahīd'". This startled them and they exclaimed: "What are you saying, Abū Hurairah?" He replied: "If you do not believe me, then read the present verse [19] وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖٓ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الصِّدِّيْقُوْنَ وَالشُّهَدَآءُ

However, another verse of the Qur'ān seems to be against this concept. It is the verse [4:69]: فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ وَالصِّدِّيْقِيْنَ وَالشُّهَدَآءِ وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ (And those who obey Allah and the Messenger are with those whom Allah has blessed, namely, the Prophets, the Ṣiddiqīn, the

Shuhadā' and the righteous...) This indicates that not every believer is a 'Ṣiddīq' and a 'Shahīd' because in addition to the Prophets, the general body of Muslims comprise three categories of believers who are specially mentioned: [1] the Ṣiddīqin; [2] the Shuhadā'; and [3] the righteous. It would appear that the three categories are distinctly different. Otherwise, there would have been no need to mention them separately. Therefore, some scholars believe that the 'Ṣiddīqin' and the 'Shuhadā'' in fact constitute the highest and most sublime categories bearing the supreme attributes. Here all believers are referred to as 'Ṣiddīq' and 'Shahīd' in the sense that every believer is in some degree included in the group of 'Ṣiddīqin' and 'Shuhadā''. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī states that it is appropriate to believe that the verse under comment refers to people who have perfect faith and perform deeds of righteousness. Otherwise, people who are believers but indulge in deeds that are not in keeping with the dictates of their faith can hardly be called 'Ṣiddīq' or 'Shahīd'.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: اَللَّعَّانُوْنَ لَايَكُوْنُوْنَ شُهَدَاءَ (The cursers cannot be 'Shuhadā''." This Tradition supports the notion. Sayyidnā 'Umar Al-Fārūq رضي الله عنه once said to the people: "What is the matter with you? You see someone defaming people, you neither stop him nor do you raise your eyebrows about it! They replied: 'We are afraid of his violent tongue. If we tell him something, he will also attack our honour.' Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه made a rejoinder 'if that is the case, then you cannot be 'Shuhadā''". Ibn Athīr cited this narration and said: "This means that such coward people will not be among the 'Shuhadā' who will bear witness against the communities of the previous Prophets.' [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]. Maẓharī states that the word اَلَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا 'believers' in verse [19] refers only to the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who reposed their faith in Allah and His Messenger, saw him and had the pleasure of his company. As such, the restrictive phrase, هُمُ الصِّدِّيْقُوْنَ 'it is they who are the Ṣiddīqs..' in Verse [19] indicate that the status of Ṣiddīq is limited or restricted to the noble Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Mujaddid Alf Thānī states that all the noble Companions had a share in the noble qualities of prophet-hood. Any Companion who saw him in a state of faith even for a short time is absorbed and drowned in such qualities of perfection. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Verses 20 - 21

اِعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَّلَهْوٌ وَّزِيْنَةٌ وَّتَفَاخُرٌۢ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ
فِي الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَوْلَادِ ؕ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ اَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهٗ ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ
فَتَرٰىهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُوْنُ حُطَامًا ؕ وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ۙ وَّمَغْفِرَةٌ
مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ ؕ وَمَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ اِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُوْرِ ﴿٢٠﴾
سَابِقُوْٓا اِلٰى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَآءِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ۙ اُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ ؕ ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيْهِ
مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٢١﴾

Know well that the worldly life is but a play and an amusement, and a show of beauty, and exchange of boastful claims between you, and a competition of increase in riches and children. (All this is) like a rain, the vegetation of which attracts the farmers, then it withers, and you see it turning yellow, then it becomes straw. And in the Hereafter there is a severe punishment (for the disbelievers), and forgiveness from Allah and (Allah's) pleasure (for the believers and the righteous). And the worldly life is nothing but a material of delusion. [20] **Compete each other in proceeding towards forgiveness from your Lord, and to Paradise the width of which is like the width of the sky and the earth. It has been prepared for those who believe in Allah and His messengers. That is the bounty of Allah that He gives to whomever He wills, and Allah is the Lord of the great bounty.** [21]

The Life of this World is Fleeting Enjoyment

The preceding verses described the conditions of the inmates of Paradise and those of the inhabitants of Hell, which will materialize in the Hereafter and will be permanent and eternal. Since the basic cause for one's deprivation of the bounties of the Hereafter and his being seized by the divine punishment is his involvement in the temporary pleasures of this worldly life that tempt him to forget the life to come, the verse under comment describes the reality of the worldly life and its being unreliable. The verse depicts the involvements of a human being that he

cheerfully enjoys from the inception of his life up to its end. The verse summarizes these involvements in the same order in which they occur. From the inception to the end of his life, man leads his life in the following order: *la'ib* [play], *lahw* [amusement], *zīnah* [show of beauty], *tafākhur* [exchange of boastful claims] and *takāthur* [competition of increase in riches and children].

The word *la'ib* (play) refers to a play that has no purpose at all, like the movements of little children. The *lahw* [amusement or pastime] is a game or sport meant initially for amusement and enjoyment, but it may serve also some other subsidiary purpose like physical exercise. It includes all the sports of the bigger children such as playing with a ball or swimming or target-shooting. Prophetic Traditions have termed swimming and target-shooting as good sports. The early stage of one's life is spent in play and amusement. Then comes a stage in his youth when man wants to adorn his body and dress and to show their beauty, which is described in the verse as '*zīnah*'. Then comes a stage in which man is tempted to prove his superiority over his mates and to make boastful claims. In old age, a keen competition and rivalry sets in to amass wealth and multiply children.

When man goes through a particular phase of life, he feels satisfied with it. But when that phase is over, he realizes its absurdity and hollowness and takes to the next phase of life. For example, a child is most fascinated with his phase of life and regards the stage of *la'ib* (play) the goal of his life. Should someone snatch one of his toys, he feels as much aggrieved as a big man is grieved by his valuable wealth and property being usurped. However, when he grows a little bigger, he realizes the things he deemed to be the goal of his life were nothing but some useless and absurd activities. The same thing happens in one's youth when he is attracted by adorned beauties. In old age, man gathers wealth and multiplies children. Power, prestige, pride and position are his capital goods and investments to wield dominance in life. The Qur'ān reminds him that this phase too will pass away. The next stage is *barzakh* [grave] followed by the Day of Resurrection. Man needs to think about those stages or phases of life because they are really eternal without an end. Allah has described the fleeting enjoyment of this world in such an order that the appropriate parable given in verse [20] follows naturally.

كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ اَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُه، ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَتَرٰىهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُوْنُ حُطَامًا (...[All this is] like a rain, the vegetation of which attracts the farmers, then it withers, and you see it turning yellow, then it becomes straw....57:20) The word *ghaith* means 'rain'. The word *kuffar,* being the plural of *kāfir,* is generally used as opposed to *mu'minin* [believers], in the sense of non-believers, but its literal sense carries the meaning of 'farmers' also. Some scholars have taken the word here in this literal sense, explicating that the farmers are happy to see the vegetation that grows in the aftermath of rain. Other commentators have taken the word *kuffar* in its popular sense of non-believers, explaining the verse to mean that the non-believers are attracted by the greenery. This explanation may be criticized on the ground that being happy with the greenery is not confined to non-believers, but also the believers admire the lush vegetation when it abounds in vigorous growth. The commentators have appraised the criticism thus: There is a world of difference between the happiness and admiration of a believer and that of a non-believer. A believer's pleasure is directed towards Allah. He believes that everything is the outcome of Allah's power, wisdom and mercy. He does not make it the goal of his life; he gives up the cherished and precious things of this mortal world in consideration for the higher, eternal things of the life yet to come in the Hereafter. That is the goal of his life he worries about. Therefore, any believer who fulfills the requirements of his faith is not attracted, even by the biggest wealth in this world as a *kāfir* does. That is why the attraction by the vegetation is attributed to a non-believer.

In short, the parable means that in the wake of rain vegetation of all sorts grows, and it pleases the farmers, especially the non-believers. But the vegetation soon turns yellow in colour, after being fresh and green. After that, the green fades away and become scattered particles of dust. This is example of mankind in this life. They are young and strong in the beginning. In this stage of life, they look youthful and handsome. Gradually, old age overcomes them which does away with all their beauty and freshness until they die and become dust. This parable indicates the end of this life, while in contrast, the Hereafter is surely coming, the significance of which is given in the following words:

وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ وَّمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ (...And in the Hereafter there is a severe punishment [for the disbelievers], and forgiveness from Allah and

[Allah's] pleasure [for the believers and the righteous] ...57:20). In the Hereafter the people will certainly have to face one of two things: [1] severe punishment for the non-believers; and [2] forgiveness of Allah, His mercy and His good pleasure. Punishment has been mentioned here first, because the preceding verses described the behavior of the infidels that they are over-absorbed in worldly pleasures, the outcome of which is also severe chastisement. As opposed to this outcome, two things have been laid down for the believers: [1] Divine forgiveness; and [2] Divine pleasure. This indicates that forgiveness of sins is though a boon that saves one from the punishment, yet in addition to being saved from the punishment, he will attain Paradise and its eternal favors. This will be the manifestation of Divine pleasure.

وَمَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ اِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُوْرِ (And the worldly life is nothing but a material of delusion....57:20) The current phrase states concisely the reality of this world. Having seen and understood all that has been explained in the foregoing verses about the transitory nature of this world, sound and intelligent people can come to only one conclusion: that is, the life of this world is a material of delusion; it is not a capital that may be useful in odd times. Therefore, after knowing the reality of the worldly life and the punishment of the Hereafter, a reasonable man should not be over-involved in worldly pleasures, and should be eager to obtain the bounties of the Hereafter. This is what the next verses say.

سَابِقُوْٓا اِلٰى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ (Compete each other in proceeding towards forgiveness from your Lord and to Paradise, the width of which is like the width of the sky and the earth ...57:21) The competition or race referred to in this verse may have either of the two meanings: [1] No one has a guarantee for the continuance of his life, health and strength. One should not procrastinate, delay, defer, or put off performing righteous deeds for future, because the time might not come on account of illness, any inability or even death. One should race against inability, weakness and death, so that one may accumulate the treasure of good deeds that may lead one to Paradise before such inabilities may arrive and stop one from the good deeds. [2] Another meaning may be to compete with one another in good deeds, as Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه advises: "Be among the first ones to go to the mosque and the last ones to come out." Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه advises: "Go forward to be in the first

line of *jihād*." Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ states: "Try to be present for the first *takbīr* of the congregational prayer." [Rūḥ]

The verse under comment defines that Paradise will be as wide as the heaven and the earth. A similar verse occurs in Sūrah Al-'Imrān [3:133] where the word '*skies*' is plural, whereas here the word *sama'* (sky) is singular, from which we gather that both the words, the singular as well as the plural, refer to all the seven heavens, meaning if the vastness of the seven heavens and the earth are put together, that will be the width of Paradise. Obviously, the length of anything is greater than its breadth. This shows that the legnth of Paradise is greater than the legnth of the seven heavens and earth. Sometimes the word width or breadth is used in the general sense of 'vastness' irrespective of its length. In both cases, the purport of the verse is to describe that Paradise is very vast, so vast that it can accommodate the entire heavens and the earth in its vastness .

ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ ذُوالْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ (That is the bounty of Allah that He gives to whomever He wills, and Allah is the Lord of the great bounty...57:21) The foregoing verse enjoined upon us to march forth and compete each other in marching to Paradise and its bounties. This could give rise to the thought that Paradise and its eternal pleasures and delights are the direct result of our actions. This verse clarifies the point that good actions are not necessarily the sufficient cause for the attainment of Paradise. Man's life-long actions cannot be an adequate price even for the bounties he has received in this world, let alone the everlasting bounties of Paradise and its eternal blessings. Anyone who enters Paradise will do so out of Allah's grace and mercy, as is mentioned in a Prophetic Ḥadīth, recorded in Ṣaḥīḥain on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ who reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said: "No one will attain salvation by means of his actions only." The Companions enquired: "Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "No, not even I will attain Paradise because of my actions, unless Allah bestows His grace and compassion on me." [Maẓharī]

Verses 22 - 24

مَآ اَصَابَ مِنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِىْٓ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اِلَّا فِىْ كِتٰبٍ مِّنْ

قَبْلِ اَنْ نَّبْرَاَهَا ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرٌ ﴿۲۲﴾ لِّكَيْلَا تَاْسَوْا عَلٰى
مَافَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوْا بِمَآ اٰتٰكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُوْرِ
﴿۲۳﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَبْخَلُوْنَ وَيَاْمُرُوْنَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّتَوَلَّ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ
هُوَالْغَنِىُّ الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿۲٤﴾

No calamity befalls the earth or your own selves, but it is (pre-destined) in a Book before We bring it into being, Indeed it is easy for Allah. [22] **so that you may neither grieve on what has escaped you, nor over-exult on what He has given you. And Allah does not love any self-admirer, over-proud,** [23] **those who are miserly and bid others to be miserly. And whoever turns away, then Allah is the All-Independent, the Ever-Praised.** [24]

Factors affecting Mankind are duly measured and destined

There are two sets of factors that make man unmindful of Allah and the Hereafter: [1] wealth, comfort and other luxuries of this world; one's over-involvement in such luxuries makes him neglectful of Allah. The previous verses have warned against it. [2] calamities, problems and other hardships that cause one to be hopeless and in turn neglectful towards Allah. The current set of verses deal with this second cause of negligence.

مَآ اَصَابَ مِنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِىْٓ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اِلَّا فِىْ كِتٰبٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ نَّبْرَاَهَا (No calamity befalls the earth or your own selves, but it is [pre-destined] in a Book before We bring it into being ....57:22) The expression 'Book' refers to 'Preserved Tablet [*lawḥ maḥfūẓ*] and the verse means that Allah had measured and decided the destiny of all things even before He created them. The expression 'No affliction befalls in the earth' refers to famine, earthquake, destruction of crops, loss in business, loss of wealth and property and loss of friends and loved ones. The expression 'in yourselves' refers to illnesses of all sorts, all kinds of wounds, hurt and injury.

Patience and Gratitude

لِّكَيْلَا تَاْسَوْا عَلٰى مَافَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوْا بِمَآ اٰتٰكُمْ (...so that you may neither grieve on what has escaped you, nor over-exult on what He has given you ...57:23) This means that Allah has informed us of His encompassing knowledge, recording all things before they occur and creating all things in due measure known to Him, so that we may know that what has met us

would never have missed us, and what has missed us would never have met us. Therefore, we are commanded not to over-grieve on the good things we have missed, nor to over-exult on the comforts or wealth we enjoyed in this life, and in turn be neglectful about Allah and the Hereafter. Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that it is man's natural disposition that certain things cheer him up and other things make him miserable, whereas the true position should have been as follows: When any misery befalls him, he should endure it with patience and earn reward in the Hereafter, and when he experiences joy, he should experience it with gratitude to Allah and earn reward in the Hereafter. [Reported by Ḥākim who rates it as *ṣaḥīḥ*. See Rūḥ]

وَاللّٰهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُوْرٍ (...And Allah does not love any self-admirer, over-proud...57:23) The expression "does not love" in fact implies that Allah 'hates' those who become proud of the bounties they enjoy in this world. But instead of using the word 'hates' the expression 'does not love' is perhaps an indication that an intelligent person should consider about all his actions whether or not the intended act is dear to Allah. This is the reason why the verse uses the phrase 'does not love'.

Verse 25

لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ لِيَقُوْمَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَاَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيْدَ فِيْهِ بَاْسٌ شَدِيْدٌ وَّ مَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّنْصُرُهٗ وَرُسُلَهٗ بِالْغَيْبِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيْزٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

We have indeed sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that people may uphold justice. And We sent down iron in which there is strong power, and benefits for the people; and (We did it) so that Allah knows the one who helps Him and His messengers without seeing (Him). Surely Allah is Strong, Mighty. [25]

Establishing Justice: The Real Purpose of sending Prophets and Divine Books

لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ لِيَقُوْمَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَاَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيْدَ فِيْهِ بَاْسٌ شَدِيْدٌ

> We have indeed sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that people may uphold justice. And We sent down iron in which there is strong power, and benefits for the people; and [We did it] so that Allah knows the one who helps Him and His messengers without seeing [Him]. Surely Allah is Strong, Mighty (57:25)

The word *bayyināt* means 'clear' or 'evident' things. It could also mean 'clear injunctions'. It may refer to 'miracles, clear proofs and evidences of Prophet-hood and Messenger-ship. [Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Ḥayyān]. After *bayyināt,* the mention sending down the Book supports the last interpretation, that is, *bayyināt* refers to 'miracles and proofs' and that 'the Book' sets out details of injunctions. In addition to the Book, another thing has been mentioned, which is *mīzān* [Balance or Scale]. Originally, this word refers to an instrument of weighing. Besides the customary balance, there are other kinds of instruments that are invented from time to time to weigh and measure other things. For example, nowadays we have instruments with which to weigh and measure 'light', 'wind' and other things. All these instruments will fall under the category of '*mīzān* [Balance]

This verse speaks of sending down 'the Balance' like 'the Book'. The notion of the Book coming down from the heaven and reaching the prophets through the agency of the angels is quite understandable. But it is not clear what it means for the Balance to come down. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Maẓharī and others have explained that 'the coming down of Balance' refers to the Divine laws that were revealed pertaining to the use of the Balance and administration of justice. Qurṭubī explains that it was the Book that was sent down, the Balance has been merely appended to the same verb but connoting the sense of inventing and placing. This is quite common in Arabic language and literature. Thus this sentence in full will read as follows: اَنْزَلْنَا الْكِتٰبَ وَ وَضَعْنَا الْمِيْزَانَ (We sent down the Book and placed the Scale.) The readers may compare this verse with verse [7] of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān وَالسَّمَآءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيْزَانَ (And He raised the sky high, and placed the scale...55:7) where Scale is said to have been set up or placed.

Some Traditions narrate that a balance was actually sent down from the heavens to Sayyidnā Nūḥ ﷺ and he was enjoined to weigh with it and fulfill the rights of people. Allah knows best!

Alongside 'the Book ' and 'the Balance', a third thing was sent down, that is, 'the iron'. The verb 'sent down' in relation to the iron stands for 'created' because it was not sent down from the heaven. There are other occasions where the verb *anzala* [He sent down] is used in the sense of *khalaqa* [He created], as for instance in this verse وَاَنۡزَلَ لَكُمۡ مِّنَ الۡاَنۡعَامِ ثَمٰنِيَةَ اَزۡوَاجٍ (He sent down to you of the cattle eight couples...39:6) In this verse, the verb *anzala* [He sent down] is unanimously used in the sense of *khalaqa* [He created]. This expression is adopted to indicate that everything in this world is 'sent down from the heaven' in the sense that everything that exists in the world was recorded in the Preserved Tablet long before it came into existence. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

According to the verse, 'iron' serves two purposes: [1] it represent power and holds the hostile opponents in great awe, and may compel the rebellious people to abide by Divine laws and system of justice. [2] it also holds great benefits for man. In other words, iron is a thing of common utility as it is used on a large scale in various industries. It is indispensable for the invention of every device, machine, mechanical apparatus, contrivance, and there is some iron in almost everything man innovates. No contrivance is possible without iron.

Special Note [1]

The fundamental purpose of sending the Prophets, revealing the divine books and erecting the Balance is mentioned as follows: لِيَقُوۡمَ النَّاسُ بِالۡقِسۡطِ (so that people may uphold justice...57:25) After that a third element is introduced: the creation of 'iron'. This, in fact, complements the same basic purpose of 'administration of justice' because the Prophets and the Divine Books set forth clear and sound arguments to establish justice. If the defiant group fails to establish it, it is warned about punishment in the Hereafter. The 'Balance' sets up the parameters within which justice should operate. If the defiant group obdurately refuses to accept the parameters of justice and is left free to go about violating them, he will not allow justice to be established. In this case, the higher authority of the state will have no choice but to take up arms against them.

Special Note [2]

Another point of consideration here is that the Holy Qur'ān has set forth two factors as fundamental to the establishment of justice: [1] the Book; and [2] the Balance. The Book sets forth the Divine rights and the

human rights, and the need to fulfil them; it prohibits their violation. The Balance lays down the system which maintains just equilibrium in human social relations. The purpose of revealing these two factors is لِيَقُوْمَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ (so that people may uphold justice...57:25) The factor of 'iron' has been mentioned last. This indicates that in the establishment of justice iron may be used only as a last resort, not as the first step. The real purpose of improving human society and establishing justice among them is to improve them in intellectual development and growth. The government may not exert its might and power to achieve the purpose of developing them intellectually. It may use it, only as the ultimate option, if they stand in the way of justice. The main thing is to cultivate the minds of the people by educating them.

وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّنْصُرُهٗ وَرُسُلَهٗ بِالْغَيْبِ (...and [We did it] so that Allah knows the one who helps Him and His messengers without seeing ....57:25) Here the conjunction 'and', according to Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, explains that this subjunctive phrase is conjoined to another subjunctive phrase that is understood in the context: لِيَنْفَعَهُمْ (so that it may benefit them) in their trade and industry; so that Allah may legally and outwardly know who will assist Him and His Messenger by carrying weapons of war made of iron and fight *jihād* in defence of His religion'. The restrictive adverbs 'legally and outwardly' have been added because Allah knows everything pre-eternally as He pre-recorded them in the Book of Decrees, and when man performs the action, it is recorded in his Account Book by the angels. In this way, its legal manifestation becomes plainly apparent.

Verses 26- 29

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوْحًا وَّاِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتٰبَ
فَمِنْهُمْ مُّهْتَدٍ ۚ وَكَثِيْرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿۲۶﴾ ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلٰٓى اٰثَارِهِمْ
بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيْسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ الْاِنْجِيْلَ ۙ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيْ
قُلُوْبِ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُ رَاْفَةً وَّرَحْمَةً ۭ وَرَهْبَانِيَّةَ ۨابْتَدَعُوْهَا مَا كَتَبْنٰهَا
عَلَيْهِمْ اِلَّا ابْتِغَاۗءَ رِضْوَانِ اللّٰهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا ۚ فَاٰتَيْنَا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا مِنْهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ ۚ وَكَثِيْرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿۲۷﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا

اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاٰمِنُوْا بِرَسُوْلِهٖ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ وَيَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ
نُوْرًا تَمْشُوْنَ بِهٖ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ لِّئَلَّا يَعْلَمَ اَهْلُ
الْكِتٰبِ اَلَّا يَقْدِرُوْنَ عَلٰي شَيْءٍ مِّنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَاَنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللّٰهِ
يُؤْتِيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٢٩﴾

And we have indeed sent Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm, and kept the Book and prophet-hood (continuing) in their progeny. So, some of those (to whom they were sent) were on the right path, and many of them were sinners. [26] **Then We made Our messengers follow them one after the other, then We sent after them 'Īsā, the son of Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary), and gave him the Injīl, and placed tenderness and mercy in the hearts of his followers. As for monasticism, it was invented by them; We did not ordain it for them, but (they adopted it) to seek Allah's pleasure, then could not observe it as was due. So We gave those of them who believed their reward. And many of them are sinners.** [27] **O those who believe, fear Allah, and believe in His Messenger, and He will give you two shares (of reward) out of His mercy, and will make for you a light whereby you will walk, and will forgive you,-And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [28] **so that the People of the Book may know that they have no power over any thing from Allah's bounty, and that bounty is in Allah's hand; He gives it to whom He wills, and Allah is the Lord of the great bounty.** [29]

Many of the Nations of the Prophets were Rebellious

In the preceding verses it was mentioned that in order to give guidance to the world and to establish justice therein, Allah sent His Messengers and revealed to them the divine books and set up Balance. The current verses give specific names of some of those Divine Messengers. Among them, Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام stands first in the list, because he is second 'Ādam عليه السلام in the sense that all human beings after the Deluge were from his progeny. Then the Prophet Ibrāhīm Khalīl-ullāh عليه السلام is mentioned as he is the father of the prophets and recognized as an ideal for all the divine religions. It has been made plain here that all the Prophets and Messengers sent after these two prophets were from their offspring. Out of many branches of the progeny of

Nūḥ عليه السلام, the branch singled out for prophet-hood was that of Prophet Ibrāhīm Khalīl-ullāh عليه السلام. After specific mention of these two Prophets, the whole chain of prophets is referred to by the words, ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلٰٓى اٰثَارِهِمْ بِرُسُلِنَا "Then We made Our messengers follow them one after the other". Lastly 'Īsā عليه السلام has been specifically mentioned, as he was the last among the Israelite prophets. Then the Last of all prophets Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ and his Sharī'ah has a pointed reference in the next verse.

The special characteristics of the disciples of Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام are given in part of verse 27 as follows: وَجَعَلْنَا فِىْ قُلُوْبِ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُ رَاْفَةً وَّرَحْمَةً (...and placed tenderness and mercy in the hearts of his followers) In other words, Allah inculcated two qualities in the hearts of the followers of Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام and his Divine Book Injīl [Gospel]: [1] tenderness and [2] mercy. As a result, they showed tenderness and compassion to one another. Or it could mean that they showed tenderness and kindness to the entire creation of Allah.

Generally, the two words *ra'fah* (tenderness) and *raḥmah* (mercy) are treated as synonyms or near-synonyms, but since they are employed here in opposition to each other, some lexicologists explained that the word *ra'fah* is stronger in degree than the word *raḥmah*. Others have explained that there are two requirements of tenderness and mercy. The word *ra'fah* means to alleviate the calamity of someone, while the word *raḥmah* means to give to someone what he needs. In short, *ra'fah* is concerned with repelling harm and *raḥmah* is concerned with deriving benefit. As 'repelling harm' is normally prior to 'deriving benefit', *ra'fah* takes precedence over *raḥmah* when the two words are expressed simultaneously.

On this occasion, 'tenderness' and 'mercy' are mentioned as the special characteristics of the disciples [*Ḥowāriyyūn*] of the Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام. Similarly, some characteristics of the blessed Companions of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ are given in Sūrah Al-Fatḥ, one of which is رُحَمَآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ (...compassionate among themselves....48:29). But another characteristic of them is given before this as: اَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ (...hard against the disbelievers ....48:29). The reason for this difference seems to be that there were no laws pertaining to *jihād* against the non-believers in the Sharī'ah of the Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام. Therefore, there was no occasion for them to be hard against the disbelievers. Allah knows best!

Monasticism: An Analysis

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً إِبْتَدَعُوهَا (...As for monasticism, it was invented by them;). The word *rahbāniyyah* (monasticism) is attributed to *ruhbān*. The words *rāhib* (singular) and *ruhbān* (plural) mean 'the one who fears'. After Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام, transgression became common. In particular, the kings and the leaders publicly defied the laws of the Gospel. When the scholars and the righteous people among them attempted to stop them from doing evil deeds, they were put to death. Those that remained, felt that they would not be able to stop them, nor did they have the power of resistance. If they lived in society, there was every likelihood that their religion too would be destroyed. Therefore, they took upon themselves in earnest that they would give up all pleasures and comforts of this life including the legitimate ones. Thus they avoided marriage, abandoned any activity to earn livelihood and any effort to build homes, and took to jungles, mountains and caves, or took to nomadic life in order to protect their religion and follow their religious duties freely and completely. They did all this out of fear of God. Therefore, they were referred to as *rāhib* or *ruhbān*. Their practice is referred to as *rahbāniyyah.*

As the Christians introduced monasticism under forced circumstances in order to protect their faith, it was not reproachable in its origin. But once anyone has imposed anything on himself, it becomes binding on him, and its violation is a sin. For example, making a vow for an act of worship is not obligatory. But if a person were to vow to do an act of worship or abstain from a lawful thing, it becomes binding on him in Sharī'ah to maintain the vow; its violation becomes a sin. Some of the Christian monks invented monasticism with the best of intentions, but there were others who could not endure the hardships of monastic life and soon succumbed to the pursuit of material gains and physical pleasures when the general body of people believed in them, offered them gifts and oblations. History bears ample testimony to the fact that the monks who detested the system of marriage indulged in indecent acts and fornication. (The free intermingling of men and women in monasteries turned those places into centres of evil.)

The current verse denounces the practice of the monks who imposed monasticism upon themselves, and once they had imposed it, they should have observed its requirements which they did not.

That there was nothing wrong originally in what they had introduced as *rahbaniyyah* is proved by a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ and recorded by Ibn Kathīr with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr who have cited a lengthy narration in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

> "Allah has split the Children of Israel into seventy-two sects. Only three of them were saved from punishment. These are groups who, after Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام, stopped the oppressive kings and affluent and powerful transgressors from violating the Divine laws. Among those who raised the voice of Truth against them and invited them to the religion of Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام, the first group faced the oppressors with whatever power they had at their command, but they were defeated and killed. Then after them a second group stood against the tyrants and aggressors who did not have even that much fighting strength as the first group had. However they conveyed the Truth without caring for their lives. This group too was killed. Some of them were ripped apart with saws and others were burnt alive. But they, for the sake of Allah's pleasure, bore all pains and attained salvation. Then a third group stood against them. But this group was weak: They had no resources to fight the tyrants nor could they live in that corrupt society and follow their religion. Therefore, they took to the jungles and mountains, and became monks. It is to this third group that Allah refers in the current verse وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنٰهَا عَلَيْهِمْ 'As for monasticism, it was invented by them; We did not ordain it for them, ...'."

This narration indicates that the people who originally adopted monasticism from among the Israelites and took care of its essentials and endured its hardships were among those who attained salvation.

According to this interpretation, the present verse shows that the monasticism initially adopted by such people was not bad or evil in itself, though it was not a religious obligation either. They had made it obligatory on themselves at their own will and wish. The element of evil

starts from the fact that after making it binding on themselves, most of them were not able to keep to its essentials. As a result, in keeping with the adage لِلْاَكْثَرِ حُكْمُ الْكُلِّ (Majority takes the status of all), the Qur'ān attributed this evil aspect to the entire Israelites in that they invented it and could not practice it and did not take care of its requirements : فَمَارَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا (...but [they adopted it] to seek Allah's pleasure, then could not observe it as was due. ....57:27).

It is also learnt from the above discussion that the word *ibtidā'*, derived from *bid'ah,* used in اِبْتَدَعُوْهَا (...it was invented by them ...) is used in its literal sense of invention, and not in its technical or religious sense of heresy. The religious concept of *bid'ah* (which refers to a baseless faith or practice that is made part of the religion) has been denounced in the following narration of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: كُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ (Every religious innovation is deviation).

The context of the verse is very clear about it. Let us first study the following sentence: وَجَعَلْنَا فِيْ قُلُوْبِ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُ رَأْفَةً وَّرَحْمَةً وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً (And We placed in the hearts of his followers tenderness and mercy and the monasticism they had invented; We did not prescribe it for them, except to seek Allah's pleasure. Then they did not observe it as was due...57:27)[1] The context indicates that just as 'tenderness and mercy' are not evil qualities, likewise 'monasticism' which they adopted is not an evil quality in itself. Otherwise Allah would not have listed it alongside the favorable qualities of 'tenderness and mercy'. Scholars, like Qurṭubī, who held monasticism as absolutely prohibited, had to face grammatical difficulties. They had to go out of their way to show that *rahbaniyyah* is not a part of the conjunctive expression joined together by the conjunction '*waw*' [and] They treated the sentence starting with "...and monasticism..." as a separate sentence, and understood the verb *ibtadā'* as omittted. The interpretation adopted above renders this construction unnecessary. That is why the Holy Qur'ān does not reject their adoption of monasticism in principle, but their failure to keep it up, and take care of its rights and

(1) It should be noted that according to the grammatical construction of this verse, it can be translated in two ways. One translation is given above in the text. The second possible translation is that which is given here. Since the following discussion is based on this second translation, we have adpted it here instead of the translation given in the text. **Muhammad Taqi Usmani**

obligations. This interpretation is possible only if the word *ibtidā'* (invention) is taken in its literal sense. Had it been employed in its religious or technical sense, the Qur'ān would have denounced adoption of monasticism in itself, because *bid'ah* (innovation in religion) in its technical sense is deviation.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullan Ibn Mas'ūd's ﷺ foregoing narration makes it clear that the groups that adopted monastic life attained salvation. If they were guilty of committing religious innovation, they would never have been counted among the saved ones, but rather among the deviant ones.

Is *rahbaniyyah* (Monasticism) absolutely Prohibited or is it a relative Concept?

The fact is that *rahbaniyyah* (translated as monasticism) generally means to give up some lawful things and pleasures. It has several stages, one of which is to treat a permissible thing as impermissible doctrinally or practically. This is distortion of religion. From this point of view, monasticism is absolutely prohibited as declared by the Holy Qur'ān at several places, like verse [87] of Sūrah Al-Mā'idah that lays down the principle يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُحَرِّمُوْا طَيِّبٰتِ مَآ اَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ (O believers, do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you...) The prohibitive verb ('do not prohibit') in this verse indicates that it relates to a situation where a person holds unlawful what Allah has made lawful, either in his belief or in practice, and as such it will amount to distortion or perversion of the Divine laws.

The second stage is when a person does not, dogmatically or practically, turn a lawful thing into unlawful, but gives it up for some mundane or religious reason. In mundane affairs, a person might give up eating a lawful thing on account of some disease. In religious matters, a person might give up the company of people and mixing with them, lest he should commit moral sins like lying and backbiting, or he might abandon some permissible things temporarily in order to suppress his base desires. This restriction is no more than a treatment of a spiritual disease. When the treatment is over, the restriction is no longer observed. Some Ṣufī adepts require a novice in the initial stages of his spiritual journey to exercise ascetic discipline, such as eating little, sleeping little and mixing little with people. This brings him to a state of greater harmony and balance [*I'tidāl*]. This ascetic discipline is a 'means' and not an 'end' in

itself. When the perfect balance is attained and the *nafs* (inner-self) is brought under control, and there is no longer the danger of committing sins, they are asked to give up the exercise. This in fact is not monasticism but *taqwā* or righteousness which the religion requires and was practiced by our predecessors, the blessed Companions, their followers and the leaders in religion.

The third stage is when a person does not turn a permissible thing into unlawful. However, he abstains from its use under the belief that its giving up has more virtue and carries more reward, while such use is proved through *Sunnah* (the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ) This is in fact *ghuluww* (over-indulgence). Many of the Prophetic Traditions prohibit *ghuluww*.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: لَارَهْبَانِيَّةَ فِى الْإِسْلَامِ (There is no monasticism in Islam.) This relates to a situation where someone abandons permissible things with the mistaken notion that it will bring him reward. If the Children of Israel initiated monasticism for the protection of their religion, it will fall under the second category of righteousness. But the people of the book were given to *ghuluww* or practicing religious fanaticism. If they turned lawful into unlawful, they fell under the first category and are guilty of committing *ḥarām*. If they fall under the third category, then too they are guilty of committing something that is condemned. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاٰمِنُوْا بِرَسُوْلِهٖ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ (O those who believe, fear Allah, and believe in His Messenger, and He will give you two shares [of reward] out of His mercy,..28) The vocative expression يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا "O those who believe..." in this verse refers to the People of the Book who believed in Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام. As a general rule, the Qur'ān uses this vocative expression for Muslims only, not for Jews or Christians. The expression used for them is *ahlul-kitāb* [People of the Book] because their believing in Prophets Mūsā and 'Īsā عليهما السلام is not tantamount to being 'believers'. They need to believe in the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Only in that case can they be called الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا "O those who believe". But here the Qur'ān deviates from the general rule, and addresses them by the words, "O those who believe" presumably because the concluding verse reminds the Christians that believing in Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام is not sufficient: the true meaning of believing in Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام dictates that they should believe

in the Last Prophet ﷺ. If they do, then they deserve to be called as اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا 'those who believe'.

Then the verse promises the People of the Book that believe in the Holy Prophet ﷺ, their reward will be doubled. The first reward is on account of their believing in Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام or Mūsā عليه السلام and following their Sharī'ah, and the second reward is for their believing in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and acting upon his Sharī'ah. The reason for their double reward is that Jews and Christians were unbelievers until they believed in the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and no worship of an unbeliever is acceptable. It required that any action they had performed according to a previous Sharī'ah would go waste. But the present verse clarifies that when an unbeliever embraces Islam, all his good actions are restored, hence he is doubly rewarded.

لِئَلَّا يَعْلَمَ اَهْلُ الْكِتٰبِ (so that the People of the Book may know ....57:29) The negative particle *lā* [no] is grammatically redundant [but rhetorically it serves to emphasise the expression]. This final verse states that the People of the Book need to know that faith in Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام is not necessarily faith in the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. In the circumstances, they do not deserve any Divine grace unless they embrace faith in the Last Prophet ﷺ. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mujādalah

(The Debate)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 22 verses and 3 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللّٰهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِیْ تُجَادِلُكَ فِیْ زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِیْٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۖق
وَاللّٰهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿١﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ يُظٰهِرُوْنَ
مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ نِّسَآئِهِمْ مَّا هُنَّ اُمَّهٰتِهِمْ ؕ اِنْ اُمَّهٰتُهُمْ اِلَّا الّٰٓـئِ وَلَدْنَهُمْ ؕ
وَاِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مُنْكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُوْرًا ؕ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿٢﴾
وَالَّذِيْنَ يُظٰهِرُوْنَ مِنْ نِّسَآئِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُوْدُوْنَ لِمَا قَالُوْا فَتَحْرِيْرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّنْ
قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّتَمَآسَّا ؕ ذٰلِكُمْ تُوْعَظُوْنَ بِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿٣﴾
فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّتَمَآسَّا ۚ فَمَنْ لَّمْ
يَسْتَطِعْ فَاِطْعَامُ سِتِّيْنَ مِسْكِيْنًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ؕ
وَتِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَلِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٤﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُحَآدُّوْنَ
اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ كُبِتُوْا كَمَا كُبِتَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنَآ اٰيٰتٍۢ
بَيِّنٰتٍ ؕ وَلِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللّٰهُ جَمِيْعًا
فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا ؕ اَحْصٰىهُ اللّٰهُ وَنَسُوْهُ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَیْءٍ
شَهِيْدٌ ﴿٦﴾ ع

Allah has heard the talk of the woman who was debating with you about her husband, and was complaining to Allah. And Allah was hearing the conversation between both of you. Indeed, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [1] **Those of you who declare *ẓihār*[1] against their wives, they are not their mothers. Their mothers are but only those who have given birth to them. And undoubtedly they utter an evil word and a lie. And Allah is surely Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [2] **And those who declare *ẓihār* against their wives, then retract what they said, obligated on them is to free the neck (of a slave) before the two (spouses) touch one another. This is what you are advised with, and Allah is Well-Aware of what you do.** [3] **But whoever does not find (a slave) has to fast for two consecutive moths before the two (spouses) touch one another. Then the one who is not able to do so has to feed sixty indigent persons. This is (laid down) so that you believe in Allah and His Messenger. And these are the limits set by Allah. And for the disbelievers there is a painful punishment.** [4] **Surely those who oppose Allah and His Messenger shall be disgraced, just as those before them were disgraced. And We have sent down clear verses, and for the disbelievers there is a humiliating punishment** [5] **on the Day when Allah will raise all of them, and will tell them what they did; Allah has its full account, while they have forgotten it. And Allah is witness to every thing.** [6]

Commentary

Cause of Revelation

The initial verses of this Sūrah refer to a particular incident: Sayyidnā Aus Ibn Ṣāmit ﷺ said to his wife Sayyidah Khaulah bint Tha'labah رضي الله عنها اَنتِ عَلَیَّ کَظَھرِ اُمِّی which, literally, means 'You are to me like the back of my mother.' Its underlying meaning is 'You are unlawful to

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(1) *Ẓihār* is a term denoting a custom of the Arabs in the days of Ignorance. In case of disagreement with their wives they used to say to them, "You are for me like the back of my mother." After saying this, they used to take their wives as their real mothers in being prohibited for them, and the ties of marriage were held to have been broken for good, with no possibility of their restoration. These verses have been revealed in a similar case where a husband (Aus ibn. Ṣāmit) had declared *ẓihār* against his wife (Khawlah) who approached the Holy Prophet ﷺ and complained about her husband. The custom of the days of Ignorance was condemned, and the rules of Shari'ah about *ẓihār* were laid down by these verses. **(Muhammad Taqi Usmani)**

me for cohabitation just like my mother.' Such an utterance, in the days of ignorance, amounted to divorce - even worse because it was taken to imply that the husband is rescinding all marital ties with his wife and, in addition, he is classifying her within the prohibited degree or permanently forbidden women like his mother. According to pre-Islamic custom, reunion with the wife was possible after divorce, but not after *ẓihār*, as she became permanently and absolutely forbidden. When this incident took place, the aggrieved lady went to the Messenger of Allah complaining about her husband and seeking redress for her problem according to Sharī'ah. Up to that point in time the Messenger of Allah had not received any revelation concerning that legal issue. Therefore, he pleaded his inability to do anything to help her in the absence of a revealed ordinance and said to her: مَا اُمِرْتُ فِیْ شَانِكِ بِشَیْءٍ حَتّٰی الْاٰنَ "I have not yet received any ordinance regarding your matter." However he expressed his opinion according to common custom and said: مَا اَرَاكِ اِلَّا قَدْ حَرُمْتِ عَلَیْهِ "In my opinion, you have become forbidden to him." Having heard this ruling, she pleaded: "O Allah's Messenger! He spent my wealth, exhausted my youth and my womb bore abundantly for him. When I became old, unable to bear children, he pronounced the *ẓihār* formula on me. Where shall I go and how will my children do their living?" According to another version, she said: مَاذَكَرَ طَلَاقًا "My husband did not mention the word 'divorce', so how can this be counted as 'divorce'?" According to another version, she pleaded to Allah: اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّیْ اَشْكُوْا اِلَیْكَ "O Allah! I direct my complaint to You . This was the cause of the revelation of verses [1-6] (Al-Durarul Manthūr and Ibn Kathīr) which clearly state that Allah heard Sayyidah Khaulah's ﷺ complaint and revealed the rule of Shari'ah to redress her grievances. Allah not only made matters easy for her, but the rule has been eternally enshrined in the Holy Qur'ān for all sensible people to follow.

The noble Companions greatly respected Sayyidah Khaulah ﷺ because her case has been the cause of the revelation of the current set of verses, which abolished once and for all the long-standing social evil that was practiced in Arabia. Once Sayyidnā 'Umar Fārūq, the Great ﷺ, was on his way with some of the blessed Companions when he came across a woman who stopped him. He instantly stopped and listened attentively to her with his head bent down. He did not move till she completed what she

wanted to say. Some of the noble Companions said: "O Commander of the Faithful! You have held back such a large group of people for such a long time on account of this old lady!" Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ said: "Do you know who this lady is? She is Sayyidah Khaulah ﷺ, the lady whose complaint was heard in the seventh heaven. So, how can 'Umar not listen to her? She should be heard for a longer period of time and with greater attention. By Allah! If she did not take leave of her own accord, I would have stood with her here till the nightfall." [Ibn Kathīr]

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللّٰهُ (Allah has heard....1) The reference in the verse is to Sayyidah Khaulah ﷺ, the wife of Sayyidnā Aus Ibn Ṣāmit ﷺ, as mentioned above. Thus this verse and the rest of the verses lay down not only the rule of Sharī'ah pertaining to *ẓihār* and redress the grievances of women placed in such awkward situation, but the first verse also is in honour of the pleading lady which consoles her, in that it says that Allah was listening to her words when she was pleading her case. The word *mujādalah* means 'to plead, argue or dispute consistently and convincingly about one's problem or case'. According to some narratives, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ pleaded his inability to do anything for her, as noted above, the aggrieved lady uttered spontaneously that 'you receive ordinances in all matters, then how is it that no ordinance was revealed to you in my case?' Thus the verse was revealed: وَتَشْتَكِيْٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ "...and was complaining to Allah...[1]". [Qurṭubī]

Sayyidah 'A'ishah ﷺ is reported to have said: " Pure is He, Whose hearing encompasses all things. I heard what Khaulah bint Tha'labah said about her husband while some of it I could not hear despite being so close to her in the same room, but Allah heard all her conversation and said : قَدْ سَمِعَ اللّٰهُ 'Allah has heard...'." [Bukhārī, Ibn Kathīr].

Ẓihār

اَلَّذِيْنَ يُظٰهِرُوْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ نِّسَآئِهِمْ (Those of you who declare *ẓihār* against their wives...58:2) The aorist *yuzahirūna* is derived from *ẓihār*. There was a cruel custom in pre-Islamic Arabia, as pointed out earlier, where the husband would utter the *ẓihār* formula اَنْتِ عَلَيَّ كَظَهْرِ اُمِّي 'You are to me as my mother's back', and thus she would become permanently and absolutely unlawful to him for cohabitation like the mother. Here the word *zahr* (back) metonymically refers to batn 'stomach or womb'. [Qurṭubī]

Definition of *ẓihār* and its effect in Sharī'ah

In order to understand the definition of *ẓihār* in terms of Sharī'ah, it should be noted first that there are some women who are permanently forbidden for a man, such as mother, sister, daughter and others in the prohibited degree. Although looking at such women is permissible in general, yet looking at some parts of their body is not permissible, (like abdomen, back etc.) Now the definition of *ẓihār* is 'to compare one's wife with any of such parts of the body of such prohibited women'. According to the old Arab custom all conjugal relations ceased permanently between a man and his wife when he would use these words; rather it was worse than divorce. In the case of divorce, it was possible to retract and take back the wife. But in the case of *ẓihār*, according to the old Arab custom, it was not at all possible to restore the conjugal rights.

The current set of verses brought about reform in the custom in two ways: [1] *ẓihār* has been declared a sinful act. If a person is placed in a situation where he needs to separate from his wife, he must choose the method of 'divorce'. *Ẓihār* should not be resorted to for this purpose, because the utterance of *ẓihār* formula is absurd, nonsense and false. Obviously, their wives are not their mothers, the Quran reads thus: مَاهُنَّ أُمَّهٰتِهِمْ إِنْ أُمَّهٰتُهُمْ إِلَّا الّٰئِيْ وَلَدْنَهُمْ "...Their mothers are but only those who have given birth to them ...[58:2]". The وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مُنْكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُوْرًا further says: "...and undoubtedly they utter an evil word and a lie...[58:2]" In other words, their utterance is false, meaning 'calling one's wife mother' is contrary to truth and fact, and also a heinous sin.

[2] The second reform the Qur'ān brought about is as follows: If an ignorant person or a person unacquainted with the legal formalities of Islam were to utter the *ẓihār* formula, his wife does not become permanently unlawful to him, nor does he have an open licence to do as he wishes - like enjoying intimacy with her. The guilty person will have to pay a penalty for uttering such evil, false and obnoxious words. He cannot take back his wife without first paying the prescribed expiation. The following verse prescribes this expiation.

The Expiation for *Ẓihār*

وَالَّذِيْنَ يُظٰهِرُوْنَ مِنْ نِّسَآئِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُوْدُوْنَ لِمَا قَالُوْا (And those who declare *ẓihār* against their wives, then retract what they said, ...58:3). The preposition *lam* in the phrase يَعُوْدُوْنَ لِمَا قَالُوْا "...retract what they said..." is used in the sense of

'an [from]. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ interprets 'retract' in the sense of 'regret': 'they regret what they said and wish to be intimate or cohabit with their wives'. [Mazharī]

The verse shows that the penalty has been imposed on the husband for the purpose of making the wife lawful - without it she cannot become lawful to him. *ẓihār* per se is not the cause of the expiation. In fact, *ẓihār* is a heinous sin for which repentance and seeking pardon and forgiveness is absolutely necessary. The concluding part of verse [2] وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُوْرٌ "...Allah is surely Most-forgiving, Very-Merciful." points to this fact. In other words, Allah in His great mercy has made allowance for man's weaknesses and He is always ready to forgive his lapses, provided he comes to Allah with a penitent heart and makes amends. However, if a person did commit *ẓihār* and does not wish to take back his wife and enjoy intimacy with her, expiation is not obligatory on him. However, destroying a wife's conjugal rights is unlawful. If she demands, it is obligatory for him to pay the expiation and take her back, should he wish to do so; or if she demands, he must divorce her and set her free from the bond of marriage. If he does not divorce her and set her free, then she has the right to apply to a Qāḍī or an Islamic court to compel him to either pay the expiation and take her back or to divorce her and set her free so that she could contract a second marriage. Islamic works on jurisprudence set down details of the laws pertaining to *ẓihār*.

The penalty for *ẓihār* is obligatory, which is given in this and the next verse. There are three options: [1] فَتَحْرِيْرُ رَقَبَةٍ (...obligated on them is to free the neck [of a slave]...) [2] If a person cannot afford to do that, he must keep fast for two consecutive months; and [3] if he is so weak or ill that he cannot fast, then he must feed sixty poor people. The expiation will be fulfilled if one poor person is given two meals for sixty days. Alternatively, it is possible to give two meals to sixty poor persons on a single day. In each case, the poor should be fed to their fill. Another possible alternative is to give to a poor person about 1.6 kg wheat or 2.12 kg dates or barley for sixty days or the equivalent price of these food items may be given. The details of the law appertaining to *ẓihār* and its expiation are available in the texts of Islamic jurisprudence.

It is recorded in Traditions that when Sayyidah Khaulah رضي الله عنها complained to Allah's Messenger ﷺ about her husband and pleaded her

case to Allah, verses relating to *ẓihār* and its expiation were revealed. So, Allah's Messenger called for the husband. When he came, the Holy Prophet ﷺ noticed that he was a weak-sighted old man. He recited to him the verses resolving his case, and commanded him to emancipate a slave, he said that he does not have the means to do that. The Holy Prophet ﷺ then asked him to fast two successive months, to which he replied: "By Him Who has sent you as the true Messenger, if I do not have two or three meals a day, I lose my sight completely." The Holy Prophet ﷺ said 'Then feed sixty poor people'. He said 'I do not have the ability for that either, unless you help me'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ gave him some food grain, and also other people gathered more food grain for him, which amounted to the measure of *ṣadaqatul-fiṭr* for sixty poor men, and in this way the expiation was made. [Ibn Kathir]

ذٰلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ؕ وَتِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَلِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ (...This is [laid down] so that you believe in Allah and His Messenger. And these are the limits set by Allah. And for the disbelievers there is a painful chastisement. 58:4) This part of the verse contains the phrase 'so that you believe'. Belief here implies 'to act upon the sacred laws, ordinances and injunctions or obey the commandments of Allah and His Messenger'. Then the verse says that the laws of expiation are limits set by Allah. It is prohibited to exceed them. It indicates that in matters of marriage, divorce, incestuous comparison and so on, Islam has abolished all traces of pre-Islamic pagan elements of customs and practices, and set down the just and approved code of conduct. Man is required to stick strictly to the parameters of Islam. Those who oppose and deny the Divine limits will be tormented most severely.

The Fate of those who Challenge Allah and His Apostle

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُحَآدُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ كُبِتُوْا كَمَا كُبِتَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ (Surely those who oppose Allah and His Messenger shall be disgraced, just as those before them were disgraced....58:5) In the preceding verse, stress was laid on keeping to Divine limits and to the sacred laws of Islam. The current verse warns those who oppose or reject them. Their profane designs shall be foiled and they shall be humiliated in this world and a condign torment shall be inflicted on them in the Hereafter.

اَحْصٰىهُ اللّٰهُ وَنَسُوْهُ (...Allah has its full account, while they have forgotten it....58:6) Man is very forgetful. He persists in committing sins and

transgressions, but because he treats them as trivial and insignificant, he is unable to remember and recall them. However, they are all recorded and kept safely with Allah, even though the humans have done the actions and forgotten them. Allah will call them to give an account of them on the Day of Resurrection and chastise them.

Verses 7 - 13

اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِی الْاَرْضِ ؕ مَا يَكُوْنُ مِنْ
نَّجْوٰی ثَلٰثَةٍ اِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ اِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَاۤ اَدْنٰی
مِنْ ذٰلِكَ وَلَاۤ اَكْثَرَ اِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ اَيْنَ مَا كَانُوْا ۚ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا
يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۷﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَی الَّذِيْنَ نُهُوْا
عَنِ النَّجْوٰی ثُمَّ يَعُوْدُوْنَ لِمَا نُهُوْا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنٰجَوْنَ بِالْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ
وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُوْلِ ز وَاِذَا جَآءُوْكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحَيِّكَ بِهِ اللّٰهُ ۙ
وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ فِیْۤ اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللّٰهُ بِمَا نَقُوْلُ ؕ حَسْبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ
يَصْلَوْنَهَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿۸﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْۤا اِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا
تَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُوْلِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ
وَالتَّقْوٰی ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِیْۤ اِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿۹﴾ اِنَّمَا النَّجْوٰی مِنَ
الشَّيْطٰنِ لِيَحْزُنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَلَيْسَ بِضَآرِّهِمْ شَيْئًا اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ
وَعَلَی اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۱۰﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْۤا اِذَا قِيْلَ
لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوْا فِی الْمَجٰلِسِ فَافْسَحُوْا يَفْسَحِ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ
انْشُزُوْا فَانْشُزُوْا يَرْفَعِ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ
دَرَجٰتٍ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿۱۱﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْۤا اِذَا
نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُوْلَ فَقَدِّمُوْا بَيْنَ يَدَیْ نَجْوٰىكُمْ صَدَقَةً ؕ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
وَاَطْهَرُ ؕ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۱۲﴾ ءَاَشْفَقْتُمْ اَنْ

تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوٰىكُمْ صَدَقٰتٍ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللّٰهُ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللّٰهُ
خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

Have you not seen that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth? No secret consultation takes place between three, but He is fourth of them, nor between five, but He is sixth of them, nor between fewer than that or more, but He is with them wherever they may be. Then He will tell them on the Day of Judgment what they did. Surely Allah is All-Knowing about every thing. [7]

Did you not see those who were forbidden from holding secret counsels, then they do again what they were forbidden to do? And they whisper for sinful act and wrongdoing and disobedience of the prophet, and when they come to you, they greet you the way Allah does not greet you, and say to themselves, "Why does Allah not punish us for what we say?" Enough for them is *Jahannam* (Hell); they will enter it, and it is an evil end. [8]

O those who believe, when you hold secret counsel, do not whisper for sinful act and wrongdoing and disobedience of the prophet, and do whisper for righteousness and *taqwā* (God-fearing). And fear Allah, before whom you will be gathered together. [9] **Whispering (for sinful acts) comes from the *Shaiṭān* (Satan), so that he may grieve those who believe, while it is not harmful to them in the least, except with Allah's permission. And in Allah the believers must place their trust.** [10] **O those who believe, when it is said to you, "Make room (for others) in the sittings", then make room, and Allah will make room for you (in the Hereafter). And when it is said, "Rise up", then rise up, and Allah will raise those, in ranks, who have believed and are given knowledge. And Allah is well-aware of what you do.** [11] **O those who believe, when you consult the Messenger in private, then offer something in charity before your consultation. That is better for you and purer. But if you find nothing (to offer), then Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [12] **Have you become afraid of offering charities before**

your consultation? So when you did not do so, and Allah has forgiven you, then establish *ṣalāh*, and pay *zakāh*, and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is well-aware of what you do. [13]

Commentary

Circumstances of Revelation

There are several incidents related to the revelation of the current set of verses. [1] there was a peace agreement between the Jews and Muslims. But when one of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Companions would pass by a gathering of Jews, they would speak among themselves in secret, prompting the believer to think that they were plotting to harm or hurt him. The Holy Prophet ﷺ advised them to give up their secret plots and conspiracies but they did not heed. As a result, verse اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ نُهُوْا عَنِ النَّجْوٰى was revealed.

[2] Likewise, the hypocrites used to hold secret counsels or conferences, in consequence of which verses: اِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَاجَوْا and اِنَّمَا النَّجْوٰى مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ were revealed.

[3] When the Jews came to see the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they, with a little twist of the tongue, would invoke curses upon him by greeting him mischievously *'As-Sāmu 'alaykum'* اَلسَّامُ عَلَيْكُمْ [death to you!] instead of saluting him with the usual اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ *'As-Salāmu 'alaykum'* [peace be upon you]. On this occasion, verse وَاِذَا جَآءُوْكَ حَيَّوْكَ was revealed..

[4] Ibn Kathīr cites Imām Aḥmad's narration in which it is reported that the Jews used to greet in this way, changing the meaning of Islamic greeting into an abusive statement, and then say, لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللّٰهُ بِمَا نَقُوْلُ 'Had he been a Prophet, Allah would have punished us for the sin we committed - why did He not punish us?'.

[5] Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the *ṣuffah* of the mosque. The congregation was large in the mosque. Some of the participants of the battle of Badr arrived late and they could not find place to sit, nor did the people sitting in the mosque make room for the late-comers. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked some of the people to stand up and leave. The hypocrites, however, found this objectionable. He also asked the people to spread out and make room for their fellow-believers and he prayed Allah for such people to show His mercy them. Verse يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا قِيْلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوْا

was revealed on that occasion. [Transmitted by Abū Ḥātim]. Piecing all the elements of the narrations together, it is possible that at first the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have asked the Companions to spread out and make room for their companions. Some of them might have complied and others probably did not. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have admonished them to stand up and leave as the students of seminaries are admonished to do in a similar situation. Probably, the hypocrites objected to this.

[6] Some wealthy people used to come to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and consult him in private for a long time which inconvenienced him and the poor people would not get much time to consult him. For this reason, verse إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُوْلَ was revealed. It is cited in Fatḥul Bayān from Zaid IbnAslam, without any authoritative source, that the Jews and hypocrites used to hold unnecessary private conferences with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Muslims were perturbed by this because they gained the impression that this type of consultation might be harmful. As a result verse نُهُوْا عَنِ النَّجْوٰى was revealed. When they did not heed, verse 12 إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُوْلَ was revealed which required them to spend something in charity before their holding a private conference. At this point the fallacious people stopped from consulting the Holy Prophet ﷺ, because their greed for wealth did not allow them to do so.

[7] When verse إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُوْلَ was revealed requiring people to give alms before private conferences with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, many people stopped even the necessary private consultation with him. So, verse [13] ءَاَشْفَقْتُمْ اَنْ تُقَدِّمُوْا was revealed. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى says that the concluding part of verse [12] فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوْا (...but if you find nothing [to offer], then Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful...58:12) had already given a concession to poor people from the requirement of charity before consultation with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. However some people are neither completely destitute nor are they completely wealthy, even though they might have the minimum *zakātable* wealth. Probably, people in this category might have felt it difficult to advance freewill alms, because on the one hand, their means were limited, and on the other hand, they were unsure whether they were indigent. As a result, they could neither pay the charity, nor could they deem themselves exempt from the requirement of the verse. They felt that consultation was not an act of worship or devotion; and if they abandoned it, it could not be the cause of reproach.

Therefore, they stopped consulting altogether. [All narratives are from Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr]. These causes of revelation will help and facilitate the comprehension of this passage. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān].

Ethics and Etiquette of Secret Consultation

Although the present verses were revealed in some particular events, as detailed above, the rules laid down by them are of general application, regardless of their cause of revelation. Thus the present verses contain instructions about secret or private consultations. They are explained below.

Secret conferences are normally convened with special confidants to whom secrets are imparted trustingly. Members of the secret society are satisfied that they will not be betrayed. It is on the basis of this confidence that evil people design plots to oppress someone, or to kill him, or to usurp his wealth and property, and so on. In verse [7], Allah mentions that His knowledge is All-encompassing - it encompasses the entire creation. He is observing or watching them, perfectly hearing their speech and seeing them - whether in public or private, wherever and in whatever condition they may be. No plots or conspiracies of any kind are hidden from Him. If they commit any sin, they will not be able to escape the Divine chastisement. Allah is present in all their secret meetings or conferences - no matter how few or many people constitute their assembly. For example, if there are three people in the assembly, Allah will be the fourth one; and if there are five people in the gathering, Allah will be the sixth one - nor numerically less or numerically more but He is with them wheresoever they may be.

Verse 7 specifies 'three' and 'five' numbers probably because Allah prefers that an assembly or congregation should comprise an odd number of members. This is the essence of verse [7].

Mischief of the Jews

It was narrated earlier that there was a peace treaty between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Jews. During this period, if one of the noble Companions passed by an assembly of the Jews, they would confer secretly among themselves in such a manner as to arouse suspicion and anxiety in the mind of the believer making him think that they were conspiring to injure or hurt him. Verse [8] اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ نُهُوْا عَنِ النَّجْوٰى (Did you

not see those who were forbidden to hold secret counsels,....58:8) prohibits the holding of such secret conferences. This rule applies not only to the enemies but also to the Muslims, in that they should not hold secret conference to harm or hurt another Muslim. However, the Muslims and others are allowed to hold secret conferences to promote good and righteous causes . A narration of Sayyidnā ʻAbdullah Ibn ʻAbbās ؓ is recorded in Bukhārī, Muslim and other authentic collections, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has stated: إذَا كُنتُم ثَلٰثَةً فَلَا يَتَنَاجَا رَجُلَانِ دُونَ الْآخَرِ حَتّٰى يَخْتَلِطُوْا بِالنَّاسِ فَإِنَّ ذٰلِكَ يَحْزُنُه (If you were three, then two of you should not hold secret conference leaving aside the third person [in another narration of Muslim : 'except with his permission'] because this bad manners would cause him anxiety and wound his feelings", [i.e. because he will feel estranged or alienated and possibly suspicions may arise that the two are plotting something against him and keeping it as a secret.] [Mazharī]

Manners of the Secret Conference

يَآيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُوْلِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوٰى (O those who believe, when you hold secret counsel, do not whisper for sinful act and wrongdoing and disobedience of the Messenger, and do whisper for righteousness and *taqwā* [God-fearing]... 58:9) In this and the preceding verses secret societies of the unbelievers have been condemned, but the condemnation is not unreserved or unqualified. The current verse guides the Muslims to be conscious of the fact that Allah is fully aware of their conversation and all of their conditions. Therefore, all their secret conferences must be held for good purposes. It is the object or motive of a particular conference that determines its nature. Thus in the present verse, as indicated earlier, the believers have been allowed to hold secret conferences only to promote good and righteous causes.

Return Good for Evil

It was narrated earlier that one of the evil practices of some of the Jews of Madīnah was that when they came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they greeted him by invoking curses upon him, thus: اَلسَّامُ عَلَيْكُم '*As-Sāmu ʻalaykum*' [death to you!] instead of saluting him with the usual اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُم '*As-Salāmu ʻalaykum*' [peace be upon you]. The word '*As-Sām*' means 'death' instead of '*As-Salām*' which means 'peace'. The latter word was distorted and pronounced with a little twist of the tongue, which

sounded like the former word, but the difference between the two words was so subtle that the Companions could hardly detect the difference. One day, however, Sayyidah Ṣiddīqah 'Ā'ishah ﵂ detected that the Jews were invoking curses upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ by saying اَلسَّامُ عَلَيْكُمْ '*As-Sāmu 'alaykum*' [death to you!], so she replied: اَلسَّامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَنَكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ '*As-Sāmu 'alaykum wa la'anakumullah wa ghaḍiba 'alaykum*' [death to you, and the curse of Allah be on you, and His wrath!]. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prevented her from this and said: "O 'Ā'ishah ﵂, Allah does not like rudeness and foul speech." Sayyidah Ṣiddīqah 'Ā'ishah ﵂ said: "O Messenger of Allah, did you not hear what they said." He said to her: "Did you not hear my answering them back by saying وَعَلَيْكُمْ '*wa 'alaykum*' [same to you]?" He further said to her 'Allah accepts our supplication against them, but not theirs against us'. This event tells us that even in response to the mischievous words of the infidels, the Muslims should always adopt a soft and noble way.

Manners for Assemblies

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْۤا اِذَا قِيْلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوْا فِى الْمَجٰلِسِ فَافْسَحُوْا (O those who believe, when it is said to you 'Make room [for others] in the sittings', then make room, ...58:11) Allah teaches His servants good manners and enjoins upon them to be kind to each other when they are sitting together. There are two main rules of assemblies: The first rule states that people sitting in an assembly should make space for those who came late. They should sit together in such a way that there is enough room for others. If this is done, Allah promises that He will widen their scope in the Hereafter. However, it is not inconceivable that this space or room might be created for them in the life of this world as well.

The second rule states: اِذَا قِيْلَ انْشُزُوْا فَانْشُزُوْا ('When it is said to you, 'Rise up', then rise up...58:11) This means when people sitting in an assembly are told to stand up and leave, they should stand up and leave. This verse uses the passive voice [it is said] but it is not mentioned who says it or who should say it. Authentic traditions make it plain that the late comer himself cannot move somebody out of his place and use it for himself, nor force his way into a gathering. Thus it is recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥain and in the Musnad of Aḥmad on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﵄ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: لَايُقِيْمُ الرَّجُلُ الرَّجُلَ مِنْ مَّجْلِسِهٖ فَيَجْلِسُ فِيْهِ وَلٰكِنْ تَفَسَّحُوْا وَتَوَسَّعُوْا "One of you should not move some other person up from his place

and sit in it, but instead, spread out and make space for the comer." This explicitly shows that it is not possible for the late-comer to tell anyone to move out of his place and take his place. Therefore, it would appear that the rule would apply to the master of ceremony or the organisers of the assembly or the host. Hence, the meaning of the verse is: When the host or his representative requests a member of the audience to stand up and leave for a legitimate reason, they should comply and avoid clash with the host. There are several reasons why this might become necessary. [1] Occasionally, the host himself might need privacy for his own reason. [2] He might need privacy to share confidential information with special guests. [3] The capacity of the room cannot accommodate the late comers, and no alternative arrangement can be made. So, the host is allowed to courteously request some of the familiar guests to leave the room to make space for the late-comers, provided it is certain that the leaving guests will not suffer any loss. They will be able to benefit in another session. However, the host or his representative must ensure that the guests do not feel belittled or hurt in the process.

It was alluded earlier that this verse was revealed when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the *ṣuffah* of the mosque. The congregation had filled up the *ṣuffah.* Some of the participants of the battle of Badr arrived late and they could not find place to sit, and remained standing. As a mark of respect for them, the Holy Prophet ﷺ gave a general order to the entire congregation to spread out and make room for their fellow-believers, and prayed to Allah to make room for such people. Some of them might have complied and there was no problem with them; and probably others did not comply. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have admonished them to rise up and leave.

At any rate, this verse and Traditions related to the verse yield several rules:

[1] The members of a conference must spread out and make space for the late comers. [2] The late comers should not remove other members of the conference and make room for themselves. [3] At times of need, the host or the master of ceremony may courteously request some of the members of the audience to leave. Late comers may not force their way into a congested congregation, but take their position in a corner or a side as recorded in Bukhārī: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was once sitting in the

mosque and the people with him, when three persons arrived, one of them could not find space in the congregation but found some space on one side or in a corner and sat there. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ lauded him or praised him highly.

Ruling

Another etiquette of an assembly is that if two persons are sitting closely, a new comer should not intrude between them. In a *ḥadīth,* the Holy Prophet ﷺ has explained this etiquette in the following words: لَايَحِلُّ لِرَجُلٍ اَنْ يُّفَرِّقَ بَيْنَ اثْنَيْنِ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِهِمَا "It is not permissible for any man to break up the meeting of two persons, who are sitting together, unless they themselves permit him." [Ibn Kathīr cited this Tradition and said that Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī transmitted it on the authority of Usamah Ibn Laithiy ؓ].

The reasoning behind the ruling is that sometimes two persons sit together for some specific purpose, and breaking them up might defeat that purpose.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُوْلَ (O those who believe, when you consult the Messenger of Allah, ...58:12) The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was preoccupied day and night with educating the people and improving their quality of life. In his general assemblies, all the members of the audience benefited from his teachings. However, there were people who wanted private meetings with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and he would grant them that. Obviously, it was not possible to grant everyone's request as it required time and effort, and that was difficult. The hypocrites made matters worse when they asked for private audiences with the Holy Prophet ﷺ in order to hurt the sincere Muslims. Besides, the hypocrites held protracted conferences with him. Some of the illiterate Muslims also held private audiences with him for a longer time than normal or necessary. This made things difficult for him. Allah provided a way to stop their irksome behaviour by this verse which lightened the burden of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Initially, the verse provided that anyone who wishes to hold a private conference with him must advance a freewill charity, the amount or measure of which is not specified in the Qur'ān. However, when this verse was revealed Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ was the first Companion to act upon it: He offered one Dinar in charity and requested a private audience with the Prophet ﷺ.

Only Sayyidnā 'Alī ﵁ Acted upon the verse

It is a remarkable co-incidence that most of the blessed Companions, because of financial constraints, were unable to act upon this verse. Its provision was repealed. Sayyidnā 'Alī ﵁ used to say that there is a verse in the Qur'ān that none before me and none after me has ever acted upon it. The meaning of the phrase 'none before me' is obvious. The phrase 'none after me' means 'none after me will practise it' because the verse is abrogated. Although the ordinance is repealed, it achieved its basic purpose. The Muslims, because of the dictates of their sincere love, avoided their protracted audiences with the Prophet ﷺ so that he is not inconvenienced in any way. The hypocrites avoided protracted audiences with him because they feared that they would be recognized for what they are and their hypocrisy would be exposed. Allah knows best!

Verses 14 - 22

اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ مَاهُمْ مِّنْكُمْ
وَلَامِنْهُمْ ۙ وَيَحْلِفُوْنَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ اَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ
لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ۭ اِنَّهُمْ سَاۗءَ مَاكَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ اِتَّخَذُوْٓا
اَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿١٦﴾ لَنْ
تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ اَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـًٔا ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ
النَّارِ ۭ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللّٰهُ جَمِيْعًا فَيَحْلِفُوْنَ لَهٗ
كَمَا يَحْلِفُوْنَ لَكُمْ وَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ عَلٰي شَيْءٍ ۭ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ هُمُ
الْكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ اِسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ فَاَنْسٰىهُمْ ذِكْرَاللّٰهِ ۭ
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطٰنِ ۭ اَلَآ اِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطٰنِ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ
﴿١٩﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُحَاۗدُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗٓ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ فِي الْاَذَلِّيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾
كَتَبَ اللّٰهُ لَاَغْلِبَنَّ اَنَا وَرُسُلِيْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيْزٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لَاتَجِدُ
قَوْمًا يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ يُوَاۗدُّوْنَ مَنْ حَاۗدَّ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ

وَلَوْ كَانُوٓا اٰبَآءَهُمْ اَوْ اَبْنَآءَهُمْ اَوْ اِخْوَانَهُمْ اَوْ عَشِيْرَتَهُمْ ط اُولٰٓئِكَ
كَتَبَ فِىْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الْاِيْمَانَ وَاَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوْحٍ مِّنْهُ ط وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ
تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ط رَضِىَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ ط
اُولٰٓئِكَ حِزْبُ اللّٰهِ ط اَلَآ اِنَّ حِزْبَ اللّٰهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ع

Have you not seen who have friendship with a people with whom Allah is angry. They are neither of you nor of them. And they swear false oaths while they know. [14] **Allah has prepared a severe punishment for them. Indeed, evil is what they used to do.** [15] **They have taken their oaths as a shield, then have prevented (people) from the way of Allah. Therefore, for them there is a humiliating punishment.** [16] **Their riches and their children will never benefit them against Allah. They are the people of the Fire. They will live there for ever** [17] **(It will be) on the Day when Allah will raise all of them, and they will swear before Him as they swear before you, and will think that they have some standing. Beware that they are sheer liars.** [18] **The *shaiṭān* (Satan) has prevailed upon them, so he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of *shaiṭān*. Be sure that it is (the members of the) party of *Shaiṭān* that are the losers.** [19] **Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messengers, they are among the lowest.** [20] **Allah has written (in His pre-destined decree), "I will certainly prevail, both I and My messengers." Surely Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty.** [21] **You will not find those who believe in Allah and in the Hereafter having friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their clan. They are such that Allah has inscribed faith on their hearts, and has helped them with a spirit from Him. And He will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will live forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Allah. Those are the party of Allah. Be sure that it is (the members of) the party of Allah that are the successful.** [22]

Commentary

Chastising the Hypocrites for their Secret Alliance with the Jews

اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ (Have you not seen those who have friendship with a people with whom Allah is angry? ....58:14) Allah condemns the hypocrites who secretly formed an alliance with the Jews who challenge Allah and His Apostle, while in effect they belong neither to the Muslims nor to the Jews. Consequently, Allah has prepared for them a humiliating and condign chastisement. It is not permissible to have a friendly intimacy with the enemies of Allah and His Messenger - whether the unbelievers are Jews, or Christians, or pagans or of any other creed. Even rationally this is not possible, because the capital asset of a believer is the love of Allah, while a non-believer relishes in opposing and challenging Him. It is not possible for a person to have sincere love and affection for someone and to love and have intimacy with the latter's enemy. Here 'love', 'affection' or 'intimacy' refers to the one coming from the heart involving intense emotional commitment (which necessarily includes having love with his way of life. Ed.). This is called *Muwālāh* or 'intimate friendship'. This type of friendship is limited to sincere Muslims. Therefore, the Qur'ānic verses on many occasions strictly prohibit Muslims from having this sort of relationship with non-Muslims. Any Muslim who has such intimate friendship with non-Muslims will be seen to fall in the circle of unbelievers.

In contra-distinction to *Muwālāh* [intimate friendship], there is a concept of *Muwāsāh* which refers to the relationship based on sympathy, kindness and concern. It includes charitable assistance and support, business, commercial, trade dealings and economic co-operation, condolence and consolation and any well-meaning attitude of well-being and welfare. Barring unbelievers who are at war with the believers, this kind of relationship is permissible with all other non-Muslims. The paradigm of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the noble Companions in this direction is ample testimony to this practice. However, it is necessary to ensure that the relationship of *Muwāsāh* is not harmful to the cause of religion; it should not create laxity in 'faith and practice' of Islam nor should it 'harm, hurt or injure' other Muslims. Please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 2/ pp 54-61: under Surah Al-'Imran: v.28-30 for a detailed account of the distinction between *Muwālāt* [intimate friendship], *Muwāsāt*

[sympathy] and *Mu'āmalāt* [dealings] or *Mudārah* [cordiality].

وَيَحْلِفُوْنَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ (and they swear false oaths ...58:14). It means they swear oaths profanely. According to some reports, this verse was revealed in connection with 'Abdullah Ibn 'Ubayy and 'Abdullah Ibn Nabtal: One day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sitting with his noble Companions and said to them: "Soon a person will come to you whose heart will be the heart of a tyrant and who sees through the Satan's eyes." Soon afterwards 'Abdullah Ibn Nabtal, the hypocrite, entered. He was blue-eyed, wheat-coloured, short-statured and skimpy-bearded. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him: "Why do you and your comrades use obscene words against me?" He swore that he did not do that. Then he called his comrades and they too took this false oath. Allah told the Holy Prophet ﷺ about their lie and profane oath. [Qurṭubī]

Believers cannot entertain intimacy with non-Believers

لَاتَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ يُوَآدُّوْنَ مَنْ حَآدَّ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَلَوْكَانُوْآ اٰبَآءَهُمْ (You shall not find those who believe in Allah and in the Hereafter having friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers....58:22). The preceding verses showed that those [hypocrites] who are in intimate friendship with unbelievers and pagans shall incur Allah's wrath, indignation and severe torment. This verse describes the condition of sincere believers who would not take an enemy of Faith, the opponents of Allah, for intimacy and friendship, even though such people are their own fathers, children, brothers or any other blood relatives. The bond of belief transcends all other bonds, even the close ties of blood. This description fits all noble Companions. Commentators on this occasion have cited a number of incidents of the blessed Companions which describe how, when they heard their fathers, sons and brothers or other blood relations utter blasphemy against Islam or the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they left all ties aside and punished them or even killed them.

'Abdullah, the son of 'Abdullah Ibn 'Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites in Madīnah, heard his father make some blasphemous remarks against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The son came up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and sought his permission to kill his father. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stopped him. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه heard his father, Abū Quḥāfah, uttering some insulting words against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The

most compassionate Ṣiddīq ﷺ became indignant and unexpectedly gave him such a hard slap that he fell down. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ heard about it, he advised Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq ﷺ not do it again. In the battle of Uḥud, Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah's father, Jarrah, was fighting on the side of the unbelievers against the Muslims. In the battlefield, while the battle was on, he purposely came time and again face to face with Sayyidnā Abu 'Ubaidah ﷺ and pursued him. Every time his father came in front of him, Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ would, as a mark of respect, move out. But when he persisted, Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ had no choice but to kill him. The biography of the blessed Companions is replete with similar incidents. The present set of verses was revealed to laud them. [Qurṭubī]

Ruling

Many jurists have ruled that this rule applies equally to all Muslims who transgress or violate the sacred laws of Sharī'ah or in their practical life turn away from them, in that the sincere Muslims should not maintain an intimate friendship or relationship with such transgressors. As explained earlier, *Muwālāh* [intimate friendship] with a *fāsiq* [transgressors] is not possible because intimacy with them is possible if and only if the germs of *fisq* [transgression] are lurking in the people befriending them. *Muwāsāh* [sympathy] and *Mu'āmalāt* [dealings] or *Mudārāh* [cordiality] are, however, a different matter to the degree of necessity. This is the reason why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to pray: اَللّٰهُمَّ لَاتَجْعَلْ لِفَاجِرٍ عَلَيَّ يَدًا "O Allah, do not give any transgressor the upper hand over me." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed thus because if anyone has the upper hand in a situation, he is most likely to get his own way. He will, for instance, show kindness to people and thus gain the upper hand; and the noble persons, on account of the kindness, will feel obliged or duty-bound to return his kindness with love. Thus the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sought refuge with Allah from this situation. [Qurṭubī]

وَاَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوْحٍ مِّنْهُ (...and has helped them with a Spirit from Him....58:22) The word *rūḥ,* according to some authorities on Tafsīr, stands for 'light', which radiates or emanates from Allah and enters the heart of a believer which urges him to perform righteous deeds, and is the source of peace and contentment of the heart. This tranquility and satisfaction is the source of great strength and power. Other authorities say that this word

stands for the Holy Qur'ān and the arguments of the Holy Qur'ān. This is the real strength and power of a believer. [Qurṭubī]. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mujādalah
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Ḥashr

(The Mustering)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 24 verses and 3 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

سَبَّحَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ
﴿١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِىْٓ اَخْرَجَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
لِاَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ ۗ مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنْ يَّخْرُجُوْا وَظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ مَّانِعَتُهُمْ
حُصُوْنُهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ فَاَتٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوْا وَقَذَفَ فِىْ
قُلُوْبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُوْنَ بُيُوْتَهُمْ بِاَيْدِيْهِمْ وَاَيْدِى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۗ
فَاعْتَبِرُوْا يٰٓاُولِى الْاَبْصَارِ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ كَتَبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَآءَ
لَعَذَّبَهُمْ فِى الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَلَهُمْ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٣﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ
شَآقُّوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّشَآقِّ اللّٰهَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤﴾
مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ لِّيْنَةٍ اَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوْهَا قَآئِمَةً عَلٰٓى اُصُوْلِهَا فَبِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ
وَلِيُخْزِىَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾

Allah's purity has been proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [1] **He is the One who expelled**

the disbelievers of the People of the Book from their homes at the time of the first gathering.[1] **You did not expect that they would leave, and they deemed that their fortresses would protect them from Allah. But Allah came to them from where they did not expect, and cast fear in their hearts when they were spoiling their homes with their own hands and with the hands of the believers. So, learn a lesson, O those who have eyes.** [2] **And if Allah had not destined exile for them, He would have punished them in the world. And for them in the Hereafter is the torment of the Fire.** [3] **That is because they were hostile to Allah and His Messenger. And whoever has hostility with Allah, then Allah is severe in punishment.** [4] **Whatever palm-trees you have cut down, or have left them standing on their roots, it was with Allah's permission, and so that He might disgrace the transgressors.** [5]

Commentary

Sequencing of Sūrahs

The preceding Sūrah had condemned the close friendship developed by the hypocrites with the Jews. The present Sūrah describes the punishment faced by the Jews in this world in the form of exile and in the Hereafter in the form of grievous torment.

Cause of Revelation

The story of their banishment from Madīnah is that when the Messeger of Allah ﷺ migrated to Madīnah, he concluded a peace treaty with the Jews. Banū Naḍīr, one of the Jew tribes living around Madīnah, were one of the three signatories. The latter tribe lived about two miles

(1) The original word used in the text is '*ḥashr*' which means 'gathering' or 'mustering' and after which this Sūrah is named. In the present context, it may be interpreted in two different ways. One, that it refers to the gathering of the Muslims who ordered the Jews to leave Madīnah due to their constant conspiracies and breaches of the treaty they had with the Muslims. According to this interpretation, the verse means that the Jews of Bani Naḍīr were made to leave the city at the first gathering of the Muslims without fighting and without any further attempt to attack them. The second interpretation is that it refers to the gathering of the Jews for the purpose of emigration. In this case the verse indicates that it was their first exile before which they did not face such a situation. It has another subtle indication to the fact that this was their first exile which will be followed by another one, i.e. the exile faced by the Jews in the days of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

away from Madīnah. Once it happened that 'Amr Ibn 'Umayyah Ḍamurī killed two persons by mistake. According to Law, the Muslims jointly had to settle the blood-wit. The Holy Prophet ﷺ first collected money from the Muslims for this purpose. Then he decided to collect money from the Jews as well in terms of the treaty he already had with them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ visited the tribe of Banū Naḍīr for this purpose. Before his arrival, they conspired to put an end to his life. When he reached there, they made him sit against a wall and said to him that they were going to gather the blood money. In the meanwhile, they secretly plotted that someone should climb the particular wall in the shade of which the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting and drop a rock on him and kill him. But before the Jews could execute their sinister plan, Allah revealed to him in time about their plot and conspiracy. The Holy Prophet ﷺ instantly left the place, returned to Madīnah and sent a message to Banū Naḍīr that they have betrayed the treaty. Therefore, they are given ten days in which to leave the town and go into exile, and were warned that if they would not meet the deadline, they might be killed at sight. They decided to leave, but 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy prevented them. He said that they did not have to leave because he had an army of two thousand men who were willing to lay down their lives to protect the Jewish lives. It is stated in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī on the authority of Ibn Isḥāq that along with 'Abdullāh were Wadī'ah Ibn Mālik, Suwaid and Rā'ish. The Jews fell into the trap of the three and sent a message to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they would not leave. As a result, he together with the noble Companions marched on that tribe. The Jews locked themselves up in the fortresses, but the hypocrites, being essentially cowards, hid themselves. The Holy Prophet ﷺ laid a siege to the Jewish fortresses. Some of their date palms were felled and others were burnt down. Eventually, they agreed to go into exile. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ forced them to evacuate and abandon their fortresses and, in kindness, allowed to take with them enough provisions, whatever their cavalry and camelry could carry except arms and weapons, which, they were told, would be confiscated. Some of them went to Syria, while others went to Khaibar. On account of their greed, they carried with them even beams, rafters, woods and the doors of their houses. This incident took place after the battle of Badr in Rabī'-ul-Awwal 4 AH. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ, during his caliphate, sent them away to Syria to live with the rest of the Jews. The two banishments go under

the names of the 'first banishment' and the 'second banishment'. [Zād-ul-Ma'ād].

The Characteristics of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr and the History of Banū Naḍīr

The entire Sūrah Al-Ḥashr was revealed in connection with Banū Naḍīr [Ibn Isḥāq]. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ used to call this Surah, Sūrah Banī Naḍīr. [Ibn Kathīr]. Banū Naḍīr were the descendents of the Holy Prophet Hārūn ﷺ. Their forefathers were scholars of Torah, which contained a full description of the Last Prophet ﷺ such as his physical features, his signs of Prophet-hood and his migration to Yathrīb (Madīnah). This tribe was under the impression that the Last Prophet would be one of the descendents of Holy Prophet Hārūn ﷺ and they would have the pleasure of being in his company. For this reason, they migrated from Syria and settled in Yathrīb. Some of the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were also scholars of the Torah, who saw his physical features and other signs of Prophet-hood and recognized him as the Final Messenger but, as they thought that he would be one of the descendents of Hārūn ﷺ, they were disappointed when he was raised among the descendents of Ismā'īl ﷺ. They were jealous and, on account of their jealousy, they were inhibited from embracing the Faith. But in their heart of hearts they knew that Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ was the Final Messenger of Allah. When, in the battle of Badr, they saw the amazing victory of the Muslims and the humiliating defeat of the pagan Quraish, their degree of certainty was somewhat augmented. They even expressed their amazement. But distinguishing between truth and falsehood on the basis, measurement, or standard of the apparent victory and defeat is a weak yardstick. As a result, when in the battle of Uḥud, Muslims initially suffered a temporary setback and some of the Companions were martyred, their certainty was shaken. After that they started conspiring with the pagan Arabs.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ migrated to Madīnah, as stated earlier, he with his political sagacity felt his first task was to enter into a peace treaty with the Jews of Madīnah and other neighbouring Jewish tribes, stipulating that he would not fight them and they would not fight him, nor would they aid and abet those who take up arms against the Muslims, and if the Jews were attacked, the Muslims would assist them.

There were many other clauses in the peace accord, the details of which are available in 'Sīrah of Ibn Hishām'. All the Jewish tribes, including Banū Naḍīr, had their area, strong fortresses and orchards at a distance of 3.2 kilometers from Madīnah.

Up to the point of the battle of 'Uḥud, they apparently kept to the terms of the treaty. But after that battle, they betrayed the treaty and started conspiring secretly, in that a leader of Banū Naḍīr, Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, went to Makkah with a caravan of forty Jewish members to curry favour with the pagan Quraish who were anxious to avenge the defeat of the battle of Badr, and had gone to the battle of 'Uhud for that reason but were eventually defeated in the latter battle as well. The defeated men returned and the Jews met them. They conspired and agreed to wage a war against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Muslims. Ka'b Ibn Ashraf with his forty Jewish members and Abū Sufyān with his forty members of pagan Quraish entered the Sacred Mosque and, holding on the curtain of the House of Allah, pledged that they would jointly fight the Muslims and annihilate them.

When, after this pledge, Ka'b Ibn Ashraf returned to Madīnah, Jibra'īl عليه السلام descended and informed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the entire episode and the details of the pledge. In the meantime, the Holy Prophet ﷺ issued the command to kill Ka'b Ibn Ashraf. A noble Companion Muḥammad Ibn Maslamah killed him.

Subsequently, Banū Naḍīr hatched many different plots to harm the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, one of which was, as reported earlier, their plot to kill him. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, after collecting blood money from the Muslims in a particular case of murder, decided to collect money from the Jews in terms of the treaty that was concluded between himself ﷺ, the tribes of Banū Naḍīr, Banū Qainuqā' and Banū Quraiẓah. Before his arrival, they planned to kill him, as detailed above. The person who was entrusted with the task of throwing a rock on the head of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a Jew 'Umar Ibn Jaḥḥāsh by name who had volunteered himself for the task. Had it not been for the revelatory information the Holy Prophet ﷺ received from Allah, their plot would have worked. But Allah protected His Messenger ﷺ and the conspiracy was thus thwarted and their plan failed.

A Lesson

It is a remarkable co-incidence that subsequently the entire Banū Naḍīr clan was expelled from Madīnah except for two persons who embraced the Islamic Faith and were spared: One of them was 'Umar Ibn Jaḥḥāsh and the other was his paternal uncle Yamin Ibn 'Amr Ibn Ka'b. [Ibn Kathīr].

The Story of 'Amr Ibn Umayyah Ḍamurī

Under the rubric of 'cause of revelation' above, reference was made to the incident that 'Amr Ibn Umayyah Ḍamurī accidentally killed two men. The Muslims as well as the Jews had to jointly settle the blood-wit in terms of the treaty existing between them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ collected money from the Muslims for this purpose. Then he decided to collect money from the Jews. The Holy Prophet ﷺ visited the tribe of Banū Naḍīr in their area for this purpose. Ibn Kathīr writes that the enemy plans to harm the Muslims are many and long-drawn-out. One famous incident in Islamic history is that of Bi'r Ma'ūnah: Some of the hypocrites and the non-believers requested the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to send a band of the noble Companions to preach the religion of Islam. He dispatched about seventy Companions for the purpose. Later on it was discovered that this was a mere conspiracy. The plan was to surround them and kill them, in which they succeeded. Of the seventy Muslims, only 'Amr Ibn Umayyah Ḍamurī managed to escape. He had seen and experienced the dishonesty and treachery of the non-believers, and how they mercilessly massacred sixty-nine of his brethren. In the circumstances, one can imagine how his emotions would have been against the enemies. Co-incidentally, when he was returning to Madīnah he encountered two non-believers and killed them. Later on it was discovered that the two men killed were members of Banī 'Āmir, a tribe which was an ally of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Banū Naḍīr was also an ally of Banī 'Āmir tribe.

The agreements of Muslim politicians were not like the political agreements of today in which every effort is made at the vey beginning to find out ways to escape or violate it. In the case of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the early sincere Muslims, whatever the tongue uttered or the pen wrote was treated as part of religion and Divine law and binding. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ learnt about 'Amr Ibn 'Umayyah Ḍamruī's error of judgement, he decided to pay the blood-wit, in terms of the sacred

law of Sharī'ah, for the two men killed. In this matter, he first collected money from the Muslims and then he had to go to Banū Naḍīr for collection. [Ibn Kathīr]

Tolerance and Human Rights in Islam: A Model for Present-day Politicians

There are many lessons in the incidents cited above for the heralds of human rights, and for the political leaders and the big powers who talk highly about them and are deemed as 'Champions of Human Rights'. Let us look at the case of Banū Naḍīr: They unceasingly were involved in conspiracies, endlessly behaved treacherously and continuously plotted to kill the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Would the present-day political leaders or heads of governments tolerate all this? How would they treat them? Nowadays, the opponents are killed even by sprinkling petrol on them or in some other execution style. There is no need for political leadership or government for that purpose. A few wicked hooligans gather together and carry out the executions. The official wrath and anger manifest itself much more grievously .

But here we are describing the government of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ: Even when the enemy conspiracies and treacheries reached the peak, no massacre was contemplated. No thought of usurping their property and wealth was ever considered. In fact, the following humane punitive measures were taken:

[1] They were allowed to take all their wealth with them, and were ordered only to evacuate the town.

[2] To do this, they were given ten days, so that they might be able to take their things comfortably and transfer themselves to some other place. When they did not comply, it became necessary to take a sterner measure at national level.

[3] Some trees were though cut down and others were burned down, but even at that stage, no edict was issued to burn down their fortresses or attack them and kill them on a large scale.

[4] When they expressed that it was in their best interests to go into exile, they were given the choice that each man could take with him as much provisions as his camel could carry. As a result, they carried their

hooks, latches, doors, planks, beams and rafters.

[5] No Muslim ever frowned upon any of the persons transferring his stuff. They took their things and moved out peacefully and safely.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ showed this kindness to them when they were completely subdued and he was in complete command of the situation. He had the power to fully avenge their treachery, dishonesty and conspiracy. But he did not do it. This behavior of the Holy Prophet ﷺ corresponds to his behavior with the pagans of Makkah when he entered the city after the triumph.

Let us now explain some expressions of these verses in the background of these events.

لِاَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ (...at the time of the first gathering...59:2). The word *ḥashr* means 'to rise'. One reason for referring to it as the 'first mustering' is given by Maulānā Thanawi in his Tafsīr. They were settled at one place since ancient times. This event of banishment took place for the first time in their life. The second reason could be that all the non-Muslims of the Arabian peninsula would have to be evacuated in future, so that the peninsula might become a strong fortress of Islam. As a result, a second banishment was to take place at some later time. This happened during the caliphate of 'Umar رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Second Successor. He banished all the Jews who had settled in Khaibar. He ordered all the Jews to leave the Arabian peninsula. From this point of view, Banū Naḍīr's banishment is the 'first banishment' and the 'second banishment' took place in the time of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه.

فَاتٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوْا (...But Allah came to them from where they did not expect...59:2). The phrase 'Allah came' means 'the command of Allah and His obedient angels came'.

يُخْرِبُوْنَ بُيُوْتَهُمْ بِاَيْدِيْهِمْ وَاَيْدِى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ (...they were spoiling their homes with their own hands and with the hands of the believers....59:2) Banū Naḍīr had spoiled their houses by removing their doors and shutters. 'Spoiling their homes with the hands of the believers' means that when the Jews locked themselves up in their fortresses, the Muslims destroyed the trees and homes outside the fortresses to make them surrender.

مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ لِّيْنَةٍ اَوْتَرَكْتُمُوْهَا قَآئِمَةً عَلٰٓى اُصُوْلِهَا فَبِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلِيُخْزِىَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ (Whatever

palm-trees you have cut down, or have left them standing on their roots, it was with Allah's permission, and so that He might disgrace the transgressors....59:5). The word *līnah* refers to a 'palm-tree'. Another opinion states that besides *'ajwah*, all other palm trees are referred to as *līnah*. Banū Naḍīr's orchards were comprised of palm trees. The reference in the verse is to the cutting, by the orders of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, of the palm trees of Banū Naḍīr who had shut themselves in their fortresses in defiance of the Holy Prophet's orders to surrender. So, some of the blessed Companions, in order to anger them or cast terror into their hearts, cut and burned down some of their date trees. Other Companions felt that the palm-trees should not be destroyed because soon, God willing, the Muslims will be victorious and the orchards will fall to their lot as booty. Thus they did not participate in the destruction of the trees. This was a difference of opinion. Later on when this disagreement was discussed, the Companions who participated in the destruction of the trees or orchards felt guilty. They asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ whether they were really guilty of a sin, in that they destroyed the property that was going to fall to the lot of the Muslims. Verse [5] was revealed on that occasion to assuage the guilt-feeling of the Muslims that whatever they have done, whether they cut the trees or left them uncut, was by Allah's leave and it was done to degrade the ungodly Jews.

Commandment of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is in fact the Commandment of Allah: A Warning for those who Refute the authority of the Aḥādīth

In verse [5], the cutting down of the trees or leaving them uncut is called *bi-idhni-llah* [with Allah's permission] whereas neither of the actions was the explicit command of Allah. Apparently, whatever each group did was on the basis of independent reasoning [*Ijtihād*]. At most, it is possible that they might have sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is a Ḥadīth. The 'Prophet's permission' is referred to as 'Allah's permission' in the Qur'ān. Thus the Qur'ān makes plain that Allah has given His Messenger the right to legislate laws. The forthcoming verse [7] of this Surah puts it that believers need to hold fast to what the Messenger bids them and abstain from what he forbids them. This shows conclusively that the Sunnah is an independent source of the Islamic Law.

Disagreement in *ijtihād* is not a sin

Another important principle derived from this verse is that if those who are competent to undertake *ijtihād* disagree with another on a particular issue, so as one of them holds something as permissible, while the other takes it as impermissible, neither of them would be counted as sinners, nor will the principle of *nahy 'anil-munkar* (forbidding evil) be applied to this situation, because none of the two rulings is an 'evil' in the sight of Allah. Under the concluding phrase of verse [5] وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ (...and that he might disgrace the transgressors) it was explained that the act of cutting or burning down the trees cannot be construed as disorderliness. But it was done to degrade the unbelievers, and therefore it carries reward in the Hereafter.

Ruling

Is it legitimate to demolish or burn down the homes of the infidels, or cut or burn down their trees, or destroy their fields and farms? The leading authorities on Islamic Jurisprudence are not unanimous on this question. Imām A'zam Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالیٰ rules that all of these actions are permitted. Shaikh Ibn Humam رحمه الله تعالیٰ, however, qualifies the ruling and restricts it. He rules that all of the above are permitted if and only if the enemies cannot be vanquished or overpowered without resorting to the above measures, or if the victory of Muslims is not probable or likely. The whole purpose of this ruling is to break the might and power of the enemy. In the case where Muslims do not win the struggle, destruction of their moveable and immovable properties may be included in weakening their might and main. [Maẓharī]

Verse 6 - 10

وَمَآ اَفَآءَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهٖ مِنْهُمْ فَمَآ اَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَّ لَا
رِكَابٍ وَّلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهٗ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٦﴾ مَآ اَفَآءَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهٖ مِنْ اَهْلِ الْقُرٰى فَلِلّٰهِ وَ
لِلرَّسُوْلِ وَلِذِى الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ ۙ كَىْ
لَا يَكُوْنَ دُوْلَةًۢ بَيْنَ الْاَغْنِيَآءِ مِنْكُمْ ؕ وَمَآ اٰتٰىكُمُ الرَّسُوْلُ فَخُذُوْهُ ۚ

وَمَا نَهٰكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوْا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٧﴾
لِلْفُقَرَآءِ الْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُخْرِجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَاَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُوْنَ
فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَّيَنْصُرُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الصّٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ تَبَوَّءُو الدَّارَ وَالْاِيْمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّوْنَ مَنْ
هَاجَرَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُوْنَ فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّآ اُوْتُوْا وَيُؤْثِرُوْنَ
عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ؕ قف وَمَنْ يُّوْقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهٖ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ جَآءُوْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِاِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقُوْنَا بِالْاِيْمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِيْ
قُلُوْبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا رَبَّنَآ اِنَّكَ رَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٠﴾ ع

And whatever *fai'* [1] (left over property) Allah has passed on to His Messenger from them, you had not urged on your horses or camels for it, but Allah gives predominance to His messengers over whomsoever He wills, and Allah is Powerful over every thing. [6] **Whatever *fai'* Allah has passed on to His Messenger from the people of the towns is for Allah and for the Messenger, and for the kinsmen and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not circulate only between the rich among you. And whatever the Messengers gives you, take it, and whatever thing he forbids you, abstain (from it). And fear Allah. Indeed Allah is severe in punishment.** [7] **(And *fai'* is especially) for the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and properties, while they were seeking the grace of Allah and (His) pleasure, and were helping Allah and His Messenger. They are the truthful.** [8] **And (*fai'* is also for) those who established themselves in the homeland (of Madīnah) and in faith before the former ones (arrived in Madīnah), who have love for those who emigrated to them, and do not feel in their hearts any**

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[1] *fai'* is a term for the properties left over by the non-Muslims and possessed by a Muslim state without fighting. As opposed to this, *ghanīmah* (booty) is a property taken over by fighting. The properties of Bani Naḍīr were taken over without fighting, hence the word *fai'*. That is why we did not translate *fai'* as 'booty'.

(Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

need for what is given to the former ones (from *fai'*), and give preference to them over themselves, even though they are in poverty. And whoever is saved from the greed of his soul, then such people are the successful. [9] **And (*fai'* is also) for those who came after them saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and those of our brothers who preceded us in faith, and do not place in our hearts any rancor against those who believe; Surely, Our Lord, you are Very-Kind, Very-Merciful."** [10]

Commentary

The Concept of *Fai'* and its Law of Distribution

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهٖ مِنْهُمْ (And whatever *fai'* [left over property] Allah has passed on to His Messenger from them, ...59:6). The word *afā'a* is derived from *fai'un* which means 'to return'. Thus the time of the afternoon when the shade of things returns to the east is referred to as *fai'*. The real ownership of the entire universe belongs to Allah. The ownership of things can be ascribed to human beings when Allah Himself declares them, through His Law, to be under the ownership of a human being. However, when people rebel against Allah, indulging in disbelief and *shirk*, their lives and properties are confiscated through properly constituted Authority and their ownership return to the Real Owner, Allah. From this point of view, all properties acquired from the unbelievers should be called *fai'*. However, the sacred Law of Sharī'ah draws a distinction between the terms *ghanīmah* [spoils] and *fai'*. The former refers to a property which is acquired from non-Muslims through active armed struggle, as in [8:41] وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ (And know that whatever spoils you receive...). However, the word '*fai'*' refers to a property acquired without resorting to an actual fight, (like in a state of peaceful surrender.) These two terms have been used to set down rules of these two types in the Holy Qur'ān. Sūrah Al-Anfāl dealt with injunctions relating to *ghanīmah* or spoils, which is acquired from non-Muslims in the wake of armed struggle. The present Sūrah takes up the subject of *fai'* and the law of its distribution. The term *fai'* includes any property or wealth which the non-Muslims might leave behind and run away, or make over to the Muslim Authority willingly or with consent like *Khirāj*, *jizyah* or commercial duty.

مَا أَفَاءَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهٖ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرٰى (Whatever *fai'* Allah has passed on to His Messenger from the people of the towns... 59:7). The phrase *ahl ul-qurā*

or 'the people of the towns' refers to the Jewish tribes like Banū Naḍīr and Banū Quraiẓah whose wealth and property were obtained without armed struggle. The laws pertaining to the distribution of the two types of spoils are different. Unlike *ghanīmah* [spoils of war], *fai'* is not distributed among the *mujāhidin* (participants in fighting). The Holy Prophet ﷺ is granted full authority to give as much as he likes to whomsoever he likes or to retain for himself at his discretion. However, a few classes of beneficiaries have been clearly defined. The *fai'* must be distributed among the defined five classes.

The foregoing verses set down the rules pertaining to *fai'*, its beneficiaries and its method of distribution. Some details are available at the beginning of Sūrah Al-Anfāl in Volume 4 of Ma'āriful Qur'ān, pages 148-151 and more details of the injunctions are available in the same volume on pages 221-229, under verse 41. It needs to be borne in mind that the wordings of Sūrah Al-Anfāl regarding *Khums* [1/5th] of *ghanīmah* is almost identical to the wordings of *fai'* mentioned in the present verse. Let us compare: 8:41 reads: 'وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَاَنَّ لِلّٰهِ خُمُسَهٗ وَلِلرَّسُوْلِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ (And know that whatever spoils you receive, its one-fifth is for Allah and His Messenger and for kinsmen and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer... 8:41). Verse [7] of the present Sūrah reads as above which means: "Whatever *fai'* Allah has passed on to His Messenger from the people of the towns is for Allah and for His Messenger, and for kinsmen and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer....59:7). In both these verses, six classes of beneficiaries are mentioned: Allah, the Messenger, kinsmen, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer. It is all too clear that Allah is the Real Owner and Master of this world, the next world and the entire creation. The name of Allah in relation to the shares has been mentioned by way of blessing or benediction, because the wealth or property thus associated with Allah's name attains honour and distinction. It also points to the permissibility and purity of the wealth. This is the view of Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, Qatādah, 'Aṭā', Ibrāhīm, Sha'bī and the commentators in general. [Maẓharī]

In the commentary of Sūrah Al-Anfāl, it was fully and exhaustively explained how wealth attains honour and distinction by the mention of Allah's name which, in brief, amounts to the following: The prophets are

not allowed to avail of Ṣadaqāt or charities, even though they are derived from the pure wealth of the Muslims. The question might arise how the *ghanīmah* and *fai'* are made lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, while they are derived from the infidels? By mentioning Allah's name at the beginning of the verse, this doubt has been removed. The point is that Allah is the real owner of the entire universe. Human beings come to own certain things when Allah by His own grace declares for them to pass into human ownership. However, when a certain segment of human beings rebels against Allah, Jihād is waged against them by Allah's command, which means that, during the war, their lives and properties are no longer sacred. In this way, all their wealth is confiscated in the name of the Authority in command. The confiscated properties are named *ghanīmah*, spoils or war booty - which goes out of the ownership of disbelievers and gets itself deposited separately as being under the ownership of Allah alone. And as stated earlier, the word *fai'* contains the meaning of 'return' and the wealth is so called because its ownership is restored to the original owner, Allah. No human being has any entitlement to it. The beneficiaries who will receive a share of it will receive it direct from Allah, and therefore it will be lawful and pure like water and self-growing grass which are direct Divine gift, lawful and pure.

In short, the mention of Allah's name in this context points to the fact that the entire wealth belongs to Allah, and it is granted to the beneficiaries on His behalf. It is no *ṣadaqah* or *khairāt* [charity].

This leaves us with five classes of beneficiaries: [1] The Messenger ﷺ; [2] kinsmen; [3] orphans; [4] the needy; and [5] the wayfarer. The same five classes of beneficiaries of *khums* [1/5th] were determined in [8:41] and now the same classes of beneficiaries are determined for *fai'* property. The rules relating to both *ghanīmah* and *fai'* properties are identical: They are in full authority of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and after him in the authority of the Caliphs. The Authority may retain them for the benefit of Muslims in general, or they may deposit them in *bait-ul-māl* [public treasury] and do not grant anything to anyone, or they may distribute them. If it is decided to be distributed, it must be done within the five classes defined. [Qurṭubī]

The practice of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and of other noble

Companions shows that *fai'* property was in the Authority of the Holy Prophet ﷺ during his time, and was left to his discretion. He may disburse it as he deemed fit. After him, his Caliphs controlled it and disbursed it according to their best judgement.

After the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his share of the booty fell into disuse. The word 'Kinsmen' in the verse means the kinsmen of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. There were two reasons why they were granted a share from this booty: Firstly, because they helped the Holy Messenger ﷺ and supported him in his Islamic activities. Therefore, even the rich kinsmen of the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be granted a share from the booty. [2] Ṣadaqah [charity] was unlawful for the Holy Prophet's kinsmen. Therefore, the poor and needy relatives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be granted a share from the *fai'* rather than from the Ṣadaqah [charity]. After the demise of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, helping and supporting him came to an end. The first reason no longer existed. Therefore, the share from the *fai'* of the rich relatives fell into disuse like that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. However, the poor and the needy relatives continued to receive their share from the *fai'* on account of poverty and need. Priority was given to the poor and needy relatives of Allah's Messenger ﷺ over other poor and needy people. [Hidāyah]. See Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 4/pp 228-229.

كَيْ لَا يَكُوْنَ دُوْلَةً ۢ بَيْنَ الْاَغْنِيَآءِ مِنْكُمْ (...so that it may not circulate only between the rich among you. ....59:7). The word *dūlatah* refers to the 'wealth or good fortune that exchange hands'. [Qurṭubī] The verse means that Allah has determined the heads of expenditure for the *fai'* in this way so that the wealth does not circulate among the wealthy, who would spend it as they wish and desire and give none of it to the poor. The verse is aimed at abolishing an old practice of the Days of Ignorance where the circulation of such wealth used to remain confined to the privileged and propertied class or caste. The poorer segment of the society had no entitlement to the wealth of the nation.

Effective Measures taken by Islam against concentration of wealth

Allah is the creator, cherisher and sustainer of the universe. He knows the human needs. All human beings, whether believers or non-believers, whether lineally rich or poor, are equal in the sight of

Allah. Allah has to a very large extent kept the distribution of man's natural and basic needs in His own Hands, so that every class, every region, every weak and strong people might be able to benefit equally. Allah has, through His consummate wisdom, kept all such needs beyond man's personal domination. No human being dare take possession of these things personally. Air, wind, atmosphere, the Sun, the Moon, the light of the stars and planets, the rain-laden clouds – all these things are such without which no human can survive for a moment. Allah, the Almighty, has declared all natural resources a public endowment for all. Not even the greatest of sovereign authorities, by virtue of their ruling powers , can ever monopolize or take possession of them. Allah's creation avails of them equally everywhere.

The second category of necessities of life is what the earth produces, as for instance water and other food-stuff. This is not commonly available. However, Islamic law has declared hills and mountains, unpopulated jungles and natural springs as public endowments. However, legitimate right of ownership of some parts of the earth are allowed under special laws to specific human beings. Some people illegitimately grab the land, but naturally even the greatest capitalist cannot derive benefit from the land without the help of the poor, the farmers or the laborers. Thus despite a sort of ownership of it, he is forced to give shares to other powerless and the indigent.

The third category is gold, silver and money, which do not fall under the basic and natural necessities of life. But Allah has made them the means of acquiring all essentials of life. People who mine gold and silver from the ground become their owners subject to certain rules. The right of their ownership is transferred in various ways to other people. If they are widely distributed and are in easy circulation in human society, no individual will go without food and clothing. But what happens in our days is that the greedy people want to benefit from the wealth to the exclusion of others. This led to miserliness and greed which, in turn, led to some old and some new systems of monopolization and concentration of wealth. As a result, people's wealth concentrated in the hands of a few capitalists and people at the helm of affairs. The rest of the population who were poor and indigent had to suffer, because they were deprived of their share in the nation's wealth. This economic situation, as a reaction, gave birth to such unreasonable economic systems as communism and

socialism.

Islamic economic system, on the one hand, shows the highest respect to individual property rights, in that an individual's lawful property is as sacred and inviolable as human life itself, and human life is as sacred and inviolable as the House of Allah. Its violation has been most strongly prohibited. On the other hand, if a hand filches or steals it, it is, under penal law, amputated. In the third place, all such doors have been shut, through which a particular individual or group of individuals might monopolize it and deprive the general public.

The unjust and unbalanced way of acquisition of wealth, such as by usury, speculation, gambling and betting, allows wealth to concentrate and circulate in the hands of a few individuals. Islam has declared all such gains as unlawful and cut at the root of all such transactions in trade and tenancy that are based on unlawful practices. Wealth that is gained through lawful means has specific ways of spending: The needy and the indigent are shareholders in the wealth in the form of *Zakāh, 'Ushr, Ṣadaqat-ul-Fiṭr* [*'Id* charity], various forms of expiation and so on. The surplus wealth may be given away in voluntary charity. If a man leaves behind assets at the time of his death, Divine wisdom has set down specific rules according to which it must be distributed. The shareholders in the assets are the relatives of the deceased, the principle in this case being *al-'aqrab- fal-'aqrab*, that is 'relatives in order of relationship'. In other words, Islamic law of succession is based on blood relationship; the nearer in degree to the deceased excludes the more remote. The needy in general have not been made the shareholders, because if that were the case, the dying person would have felt the need to spend his assets anyhow, rightly or wrongly, before his death. When he sees only his near and dear ones receiving, this urge does not develop in his heart.

This means of acquiring wealth blocks the way to monopolization. The second means of acquiring wealth is war and *jihād*. The gains made in this way are distributed according to the Islamic rules. Some of them have been set down in Sūrah Al-Anfāl and others in this Sūrah. How unwise and short-sighted are those people who give up Islam's balanced system of economics based on justice, fair-play and compassion, and innovate new systems of wealth distribution, which are unjust and unbalanced, and disturb world peace?

وَمَا اٰتٰكُمُ الرَّسُوْلُ فَخُذُوْهُ ۚ وَمَا نَهٰكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوْا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ (...Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever thing he forbids you, abstain [from it]. And fear Allah....59:7). This verse is in connection with *fai'* property, and it purports to say that Allah has set down the beneficiaries of this property. However, the question which beneficiary will receive how much have been left to the discretion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, the Muslims are advised to happily accept the amount the Holy Prophet ﷺ grants them, and they should not be anxious to receive what he has not given to them. This has been further emphasized by the injunction اِتَّقُوا اللّٰه (Fear Allah). If anyone collects under false pretext more than what he is granted, Allah is fully aware and will punish him.

The Messenger's Command is Binding like the Qur'ānic Command

Although the verse was revealed in connection with *fai'*, its words are general. They are not specific to wealth. They cover all the commands as well. Hence, the generalized meaning of the verse is that whatever the Holy Prophet ﷺ gives to a person, be it wealth, any other grant or any command, the people must show their willingness to accept it. And whatever he forbids them, they should stay away from it.

Many of the Companions took the generalized sense of the verse, and on the basis of it, they took the Holy Prophet's ﷺ commandment as binding as the Qur'ānic commandment. Qurṭubī said that in this verse the antonym of *'ātā* [gives] is *nahā* [forbids]. This shows that the verb *'ātā* [gives] is used in the sense of *amara* [commands] which is the direct antonym of *nahā* [forbids]. The Qur'ān, instead of using the direct opposite of naha [forbids] which is *amara* [commands], employed the verb *'ātā* [gives] presumably to embrace the context of the subject-matter where the verse occurs, that is, the disbursement of *fai'* property.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه once saw a person in the state of *iḥrām* wearing sewn clothes (which is impermissible in that state). He asked him to take off the clothes. The person asked him to recite a Qur'ānic verse in support of his claim that a pilgrim is prohibited to put on a sewn garb. Sayyidnā 'Abdullan Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه recited this very verse مَا اٰتٰكُمُ الرَّسُوْلُ فَخُذُوْهُ (Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it....".

Imām Shāfi'ī رحمه الله تعالى once said to his congregation: (Ask whatever question you wish, and I will answer from the Qur'ān.) A person said that

a pilgrim killed a wasp in the state of *iḥrām* and asked: "What is the rule about it?" Imām Shāfi'ī رحمه الله تعالى recited this verse of the Qur'ān مَآ اٰتٰكُمُ الرَّسُوْلُ فَخُذُوْهُ (Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it...." and coupled it with a Tradition which gives the injunction relating to the killing of a wasp. [Qurṭubī].

لِلْفُقَرَآءِ الْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ ([And *fai'* is especially] for the poor emigrants...[59:8]". The few verses from here till the end of the section describe the poor emigrants (*muhājirīn*), helpers (*Anṣār*) and the general members of Ummah that were yet to come in this world. Grammatically, the prepositional phrase 'for the emigrants' is a complement to the prepositional phrase 'for the kinsmen' occurring in verse [7] [Maẓharī]. What this verse purports to say is that although the beneficiaries of *fai'* are orphans, the needy and the wayfarers as mentioned in the preceding verse, priority and precedence will be given to those whose service to religion, personal qualities and religious perfection are well- known.

Priority should be given to the Indigent Righteous and Religious Scholars serving the Cause of Islam when distributing Charity

This shows that although charities, especially *fai'* are meant to fulfill the needs of the indigent Muslims in general, the righteous, especially students and learned scholars serving the cause of religion should be given priority over all others. This is the reason why Islamic governments gave allowance from the *fai'* fund to learned scholars, *muftīs* and judges for serving the cause of education, propagation of Islam and reform of human beings, because these verses establish two categories of the noble Companions. Under the first category fall the emigrants who in the very first instance made great sacrifices for Islam and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They endured great hardships, and eventually bid farewell to their wealth and property, to their land and country, and to their relatives and the near and dear ones, and emigrated to Madīnah. Under the second category fall the *Anṣār*, the natives of Madīnah who helped the emigrants and cooperated with them. They invited the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and with him the emigrants and thus caused the whole world around them to stand in their opposition. Their hospitality is unparalleled in the annals of the nations of the world. After these two major categories, comes a third category which comprises those people who embraced Islam after the blessed Companions and followed their footsteps closely. The last category

embraces all Muslims who will follow until the Last Hour. The three categories are discussed below, in succession.

The Merits of al-Muhājirīn [The Emigrants]

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَّيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصّٰدِقُونَ

([And *fai'* is especially] for the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and properties, while they were seeking the grace of Allah and (His) pleasure, and were helping Allah and His Messenger. They are the truthful....59:8)

This verse describes all the characteristics of the emigrants. The first of them is that they were driven from their homes and wealth, that is to say, their only crime was that they had embraced Islam and supported the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, as a result of which the pagans of Makkah persecuted them, so much so that they had to abandon their hearths and homes and emigrate to Madīnah. Some of them had to tie stones to their stomach on account of unbearable hunger, and others used to protect themselves against cold by digging holes in the ground, because they did not have clothes to save them from the chill of winter. [Maẓharī, Qurṭubī]

An Important Issue: The rule about the control of unbelievers over the wealth and property of the Muslims

This verse describes the emigrants as poor, whereas a *faqīr* [poor] in Islamic law refers to a person who has no property whatever, or a person who possesses a little property, but is poor because he does not possess the minimum amount of property constituting *niṣāb* of *Zakāh*. However, most of the emigrants were rich, wealthy and affluent while they were in Makkah. Even after migration, if the wealth had remained in their ownership, it would be inappropriate to refer to them as 'poor' because they had *niṣāb* of *Zakāh*. But the Qur'ān refers to them as 'poor' and thus points out that the wealth and property which they had left behind in Makkah, and the pagans subsequently took possession of them, became the property of the pagans and the Muslims lost its ownership.

Therefore, Imāms Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik رحمهم الله تعالى ruled that if Muslims abandon their homes and possessions and migrate to some other land, and the non-believers take control of their abandoned homes and property, the ownership passes into their hands and Muslims lose

ownership. Similarly, if - God forbid! - the unbelievers conquer an Islamic country, usurping Muslim property and wealth, then after having full control over it, they are deemed as owners of that property. Consequently, their transactions of sale and purchase of such properties are recognized in Sharīʿah. Maẓharī has, on this occasion in his commentary, cited all the relevant Traditions supporting this view.

The second characteristic of the emigrants is described thus: يَبْتَغُوْنَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانًا (...seeking the grace of Allah and [His] pleasure...59:8). When they embraced Islam, abandoned their country and wealth and migrated, they did not have any ulterior motive. They did all this only to seek Divine favour and gain His good pleasure. This indicates their perfect sincerity. The word *faḍl* [bounty, grace] is normally used for worldly blessings and *riḍwān* [good pleasure] for blessings of the Hereafter. From this viewpoint, the verse purports to describe that the emigrants gave up all their previous means of luxury, such as their hearths and homes, and now they were in quest of their worldly needs and the blessings of the Hereafter in the shade of Islam. Their objective was to seek the necessities of worldly life under the banner of Allah's and His Messenger's ﷺ efficacious grace.

The third characteristic of the emigrants is described thus: وَيَنْصُرُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ (...and were helping Allah and His Messenger...59:8). The phrase 'help Allah' means to help His religion, for which they made tremendous and amazing self-sacrifices.

The fourth characteristic of the emigrants is described thus: أُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الصّٰدِقُوْنَ (... They are the truthful...59:8). That is, such people are sincerely true in words and deeds. The covenant they made with Allah and His Messenger by reciting the *kalīmah*, they duly fulfilled it and proved themselves to be true about it. This verse candidly testifies to the truthfulness of all emigrant Companions. Anyone calling any of them a 'liar' cannot be a Muslim, because he is rejecting this verse. God forbid! Rawāfiḍ call these Companions 'hypocrites'. This is a clear rejection of the verse. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ held the emigrant Companions in such high esteem that when he prayed to Allah, he would supplicate through their *wasīlah*. [as transmitted by Al-Baghawī and Maẓharī].

The Merits of Anṣār [The Helpers]

وَالَّذِيْنَ تَبَوَّءُوْ الدَّارَ وَالْاِيْمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ (And [*fai'* is also for] those who established

themselves in the homeland [of Madīnah] and in faith before the former ones [arrived in Madīnah] ...59:9). The word *tabawwu'* means 'to make dwelling in the abode'. The word *dar* refers to Madīnah which has a special distinction. Therefore, Imām Mālik ﷺ, from one point of view, regarded Madīnah Ṭayyibah as the most distinguishable of all the cities in the world. He used to say that wherever Islam reached and any city that was conquered, it was conquered by means of *jihād* - including Makkah Mukarramah. Madīnah Ṭayyibah is the only exception. It was conquered by means of *'Īmān*. [Qurṭubī].

In this verse, under the word *tabawwu'* [to settle in an abode] the words *dār* [home] and *'īmān* [faith] are coupled. It could be objected that a 'home' can be found in a place where a person might settle in, but 'faith' is not an 'abode' where a person might find a place to settle in. Some of the scholars take the position that in this context the following verbs أَخْلَصُوا or تَمَكَّنُوا to be understood and they mean "These are the people who settled in their abode and became sincere and strong in their faith". It is possible to take the word 'faith' in its metaphorical sense, that is in the sense that 'it is a fortified house' where refuge is taken. The phrase *min qablihim* [before them] describes another characteristic of Anṣār, which means that they had settled in Madīnah before the Emigrants, while Madīnah was so important a city that all the Muslims living in Makkah were ordered to emigrate to it and it became the center of Islam.

The second characteristic of the Helpers is described in يُحِبُّوْنَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ (...have love for those who emigrated to them...59:9) The Emigrants from Makkah came to the Helpers, deprived and denuded of all their possessions. Normally, no community is willing to allow such a large number of distressed people to settle in their city. Instead, the quarrels between natives and emigrants are found everywhere. But the Anṣār received them with open arms and made them equal partners in their belongings. The bond of love and brotherhood which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ established between the Emigrants and the Helpers, and to which this verse bears an eloquent testimony, stands unrivalled in the whole history of human relationships. There was no dearth of the Helpers who were eager to take on the Emigrants. In fact, for each Emigrant there were several applications to take him on. There were many instances in which lots had to be cast. When the lot of a particular Helper

fell in favour of a particular Emigrant, he was handed to him. [Maẓharī]

The third characteristic of the Helpers is described in وَلَا يَجِدُوْنَ فِي صُدُوْرِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّآ اُوْتُوْا (...and do not feel in their hearts any need for what is given to the former ones [from *fai'*], ...[59:9]". This statement is concerned with the banishment of Banū Naḍīr and their orchards and homes falling into Muslim hands.

Distribution of Banū Naḍīr's properties

As stated earlier, the relevant verse has given discretionary powers to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in matters of distributing the *fai'* property. It was a time when the Muhājirīn (Emigrants) had neither homes of their own nor any property. They lived in the homes of the Anṣār, and worked on their farms to earn their livelihood. When the wealth of Banū Naḍīr and Banū Qainuqā' were obtained as *fai'*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called the leader of the Anṣār, Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qais Ibn Shammās رضي الله عنه, and asked him to bring his people to him. He asked: "O Messenger of Allah, should I call my tribe of the Anṣār, Banū Khazraj, or all of the tribes of the Anṣār?" He replied: "All of them." They all gathered. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ delivered a sermon in which he spoke highly of the Anṣār as to the manner in which they accommodated the Refugee brethren. He said it was a work of great determination and courage. After that he said: 'Allah has granted you the wealth of Banū Naḍīr. If you wish, I will divide the wealth between the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār; and the Refugees will remain as usual in the homes of the Anṣār. Or if you wish, the wealth may be distributed among the homeless Refugees; and they may move out of your homes and settle in their own homes.'

Having heard this sermon, two of the great chiefs of the Anṣār, Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubadah and Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh رضي الله عنهما - stood and said: "O Messenger of Allah, we are of the view that the entire wealth of *fai'* be distributed among the Refugee brethren, and in addition they may continue to reside in our homes as usual." At this all the Anṣār unanimously said, "We concur with this decision and are happy with it." On that occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ supplicated for the Anṣār and their children. He then distributed the entire *fai'* among the Muhājirīn. Only two of the Anṣār received a grant from the *fai'* , because they were very poor. Their names are Sayyidnā Sahl Ibn Ḥunaif رضي الله عنه and Abū Dujānah رضي الله عنه. Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh رضي الله عنه was given a sword which was a

distinguished sword of Ibn Abil-Ḥuqaīq. [Maẓharī with reference to Sabī-ur-Rashād by Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf As-Ṣāliḥī]

The present verse admires the Anṣār on this attitude by saying, وَلَا يَجِدُوْنَ فِىْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّآ اُوْتُوْا (...and do not feel in their hearts any need for what is given to the former ones [from *fai'*], ...59:9). The word 'need' means 'any item of need'. The verse means 'Whatever the Muhājirīn were granted in this distribution, the Anṣār happily accepted it as if they had no need for any of those items. It was inconceivable that they would complain about it enviously.' When Baḥrain was conquered, the same spirit of self-sacrifice was displayed again by the Anṣār. The Holy Prophet ﷺ expressed his intention to distribute the entire conquered lands of that territory among the Anṣār, but they courteously refused to accept any share of it unless a similar share was granted to the Muhājirīn.

The fourth characteristic of the Anṣār is described in the verse is: وَيُؤْثِرُوْنَ عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ (...and give preference (to them) over themselves, even though they are in poverty ....59:9). The word *khaṣāṣah* means 'poverty' and the word *'īthār* means 'to prefer the wish, need and desire of others above those of oneself'. The meaning of the verse is that the Anṣār used to prefer the needs of others (i.e. the Muhājirīn,) to their own needs. That is, the former used to fulfil the needs of the latter first, then they would fulfil their own needs, even though they themselves were poor and needy.

For the interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses, there is no need to recount incidents. But because they develop in human beings the highest degree of human qualities and bring about a reform in their lives, the commentators have recounted these events in detail on this occasion, especially Qurṭubī. We cite below a few of them from his commentary.

It is recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that one night a guest came to an Anṣārī's house. The latter had only as much food as he and his children could eat. He said to his wife: 'Put the children off to sleep somehow, and put out the lamp. Then place the food in front of the guest, and sit next to him so that he may be under the impression that we too are eating, but we will not eat so that the guest may be able to eat comfortably.' At this, the present verse was revealed. [At-Tirmidhī has rated this *ḥadīth* as '*ḥasan, ṣaḥīḥ*'].

Tirmidhī records another narration on the authority of Sayyidnā Abu Hurairah ﷺ that a person came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said: "I am hungry and distressed." The Holy Prophet ﷺ sent a message to one of his blessed wives, but she replied: "We do not have anything except water." Then he sent a message to his another wife, and she made the same reply. Then to a third one and then to a fourth one until the message went to all the mothers of the faithful, and they all replied that they had nothing besides water. Then he addressed the congregation and asked if any of them would be willing to entertain the guest, in response to which a venerable Anṣārī said: "O Messenger of Allah, I will entertain him." So he took him with and asked his wife whether there was anything to eat. She replied: "Only as much as our children could eat." He asked his wife to put the children to sleep and then said: "Place the food in front of the guest, sit and then get up and put out the lamp. The guest should not feel that we are not eating." The guest ate the food. In the morning, the Companion went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ who informed him that Allah was very pleased with the way he handled the situation the previous night.

Mahdawī narrates a similar incident of Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qais ﷺ, a venerable Anṣārī who entertained his guest one night by putting the light off. There is a common statement appended to all these incidents: 'The above verse was revealed in connection with this event.'

Qushairī cites a story on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ who reports that a person sent the head of a goat as a gift to a venerable personality from among the blessed Companions. He thought that about a Muslim brother that he and his family are more in need of this, so he sent the head to him. When the second venerable Companion received it, he sent it to a third person who in turn sent it to a fourth person. In this way it circulated in seven houses and eventually it returned to the first venerable personality. On this occasion, the verse was revealed. Tha'labī has also recorded this narration on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ.

It is recorded in Muwaāṭṭā' of Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﷺ that a poor person wanted something to eat. She had only one bread, and she was fasting that day. She asked her maid to give him the bread. The maid said that if it was given away,

there would be nothing left for her to break her fast in the evening. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﷺ insisted and gave the bread to the poor person. The maid says: "It so happened after this that a person, who was not accustomed to send any gift, sent a whole roasted goat which was completely covered with batter on the outside, which is thought to be the best Arab dish." Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﷺ called the maid and said: "Come, eat this. This is better than that bread of yours."

Nasā'ī has recorded that once Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ fell sick and he felt like eating grapes. A bunch of grapes was bought for him for a dirham. Co-incidentally, a poor person came begging. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ said that the bunch be given to him. One of the Companions furtively followed him, and bought off the bunch from the beggar and gave it back to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ, but the beggar came again and begged, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ gave it to him again. Again someone went behind the beggar secretly and bought off the bunch from him for a dirham and gave it to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ. The beggar wanted to turn up the third time and beg, but the people stopped him. If Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ knew that the bunch is the same one that he gave out in *ṣadaqah,* he would never have accepted it and eaten it. He probably thought that someone had brought it for him from the market-place, and therefore he had eaten it.

Sayyidnā Ibn Mubārak reports on the authority of his chain of transmitters that once Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ sent four thousand Dīnārs in a moneybag to Sayyidnā Abu 'Ubaidah ﷺ with his servant, with the message that the money was being sent as a gift. He should use it as he deemed fit. The servant was instructed to remain for a while in the house to see what he would do with the money. The servant, accordingly, gave the moneybag to him and waited for a while. Sayyidnā Abu 'Ubaidah ﷺ took the bag full of money and supplicated for Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ that Allah may reward him and shower his mercy upon him. Instantly, he called his slave-girl and instructed her to give seven Dīnārs to so-and-so, five Dīnārs to so-and-so until all four thousand Dīnārs were distributed then and there.

The servant came back and narrated the story. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ filled another moneybag with four thousand Dīnārs and sent it with the servant to Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal ﷺ, with the same message to him

and with the same instruction to the servant. The servant followed the instruction. Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal ﷺ took the bag of money and supplicated to Allah for Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ, thus: رَحِمَهُ اللهُ وَ وَصَلَهُ "May Allah shower His mercy upon him and reward him." Then he too immediately sat down to distribute the money. He divided the money into many portions and sent them to different houses. His wife was watching all that was happening. She could not hold herself and eventually spoke out: "By Allah! We too are poor and we should also receive something." At that time only two Dīnārs had remained in the bag, and he gave them to her. The servant saw all this, returned to Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ and reported to him all that he saw. He said: "They are all brothers, and they all have the same disposition."

Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah 'Adawī ﷺ narrates: "During the battle of Yarmūk, I went out in search of my paternal uncle's son [cousin] among the martyrs, and took with me some water just in case there was the last breath of life left in him, so I would give him a sip of water. When I reached him, there was the last spark of life left in him. I asked him whether he would like to have a sip of water, and he nodded 'yes'. Just as I was going to pour the water into his mouth, another martyr next to him heaved a sigh. My cousin indicated to give him the water. When I reached him and was about to give him the water, I heard the voice of a third martyr. The second martyr indicated to give the water to the third one. This series of events continued up to seven martyrs. When I reached the seventh martyr to give water, he had already breathed his last. From there I went back to my cousin, he had also met his end."

These are a few events, some of which relate to the Anṣār, and others to the Muhājirīn. About a number of these incidents, it is said that the verse under comment was revealed regarding them. In fact, there is no contradiction in these narrations, because it is a well-known habit of narrators that if a verse was revealed under a certain circumstance, and a similar incident took place on another occasion, they mention the second incident as a cause of revelation of that verse as well. In fact, all similar incidents can be said to be the cause of revelation of the verse or, at least, included in its purport.

Disposing of a Possible Doubt

Here we need to dispose of a possible doubt that might arise from the

noble Companions' narratives of self-sacrifice that were recounted above. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited for a Muslims to give away all his wealth in charity. For instance, it is reported in a Tradition that a person came with a piece of gold, about the size of an egg, so that it may be given in charity. The Holy Prophet ﷺ threw it towards himself and said: "Some of you bring all your wealth to be given away in charity, then they become poor and go around begging." The question is how and why did the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ give away whatever they had in the incidents cited above despite the prohibition of such an act?

Answer to this question can be inferred from these very narratives. In fact, people's conditions are different. Accordingly, the rulings differ from condition to condition. The ruling of prohibition applies to those people who, after giving away all their wealth in charity, regret, and cannot endure their poverty but go around begging. But those people who, after giving away all their wealth in charity, do not regret or feel distressed or agitated, they in fact face the situation with calm courage and resolute endurance. For such people, it is permitted to spend all their wealth in Allah's way. Let us take the case of Sayyidnā Ṣiddīq Akbar رضي الله عنه who donated all his belongings when fund was being collected for a *jihād*. The stories narrated above belong to this category. Such people trained and developed their families also to face the ordeals of life with the same calm courage and resolute endurance. Therefore, their rights were not usurped or destroyed either. If the wealth were in the control of their families, they too would have done the same thing.

Muhājirīn [The Refugees] Reciprocate the Anṣārs' Self-Sacrifice

No social activities or self-sacrifice is possible unilaterally. It has to be bilateral. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has urged the Muslims to exchange gifts with each other and thus enhance their mutual love. So likewise, if a Muslim has given a gift to another, he should repay the gift as a gesture of goodwill. If Allah has granted him abundant wealth, then he should use the wealth to reciprocate. Otherwise, supplication should be enough to reciprocate. It is not in keeping with the principles of ethics or good manners to owe a debt of gratitude to people.

The Anṣār displayed a great deal of self-sacrifice in the matter of the Muhājirīn. The former made the latter partners in their homes, their shops, their businesses, their land and their agriculture. When Allah gave

the Muhājirīn affluence, they did not fall short in doing a good turn in return for their favours.

Qurṭubī cites a narration of the two Ṣaḥīḥs on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ﷺ that when the Muhājirīn arrived in Madīnah from Makkah, they were absolutely empty-handed. The Anṣār, on the other hand, had properties and lands, and they shared half-and-half of all their holdings with the Muhājirīn. The former gave half of their fruits to the latter annually. Umm Sulaim رضی الله عنها, the mother of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ, gave a few of her palm trees to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which he granted to Usāmah Ibn Zaid's mother, Umm 'Aiman رضی الله عنها.

Imām Zuhrī says that Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ﷺ reports that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ returned successfully from the expedition of Khaibar to Madīnah, the Refugees - all of them - calculated all the gifts of the Anṣār and returned them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ took back the trees that were granted to 'Umm 'Aiman and returned them to 'Umm Sulaim رضی الله عنها, and granted trees to 'Umm 'Aiman from his own orchard.

وَمَنْ يُّوْقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ (... And whoever is saved from the greed of his soul, then such people are the successful....59:9) After the mention of the Anṣār's selflessness and self-sacrifice, a general rule of law or a universal principle is being laid down in the concluding part of verse [9]. The words *shuḥḥ* [avarice] and *bukhl* [greed, miserliness] are near synonyms. The word *shuḥḥ*, however, yields the sense of intensive greed for money and possessions. *Shuḥḥ* [avarice] and *bukhl* [greed, miserliness] are absolutely forbidden when a person fails to fulfil obligatory rights, which might be Divine rights, such as *Zakāh*, *ṣadaqat-ul-fiṭr*, 'Ushr, oblation and so on, or they might be human rights, such as the maintenance of the family, needy parents and relatives. It is repugnant and reprehensible if *shuḥḥ* [avarice] and *bukhl* [greed, miserliness] prevent one from spending for laudable and rewardable acts. If one does not spend on customary things, it is not *shuḥḥ* [avarice] and *bukhl* in terms of the sacred laws of Sharī'ah.

Avarice, niggardliness and jealousy are such evil qualities as the Qur'ān and Prophetic Traditions have severely denounced. There are glad tidings for those who avoid them. The Anṣār have many good qualities, among which is their immunity from avarice and jealousy.

Being free of Malice and Jealousy is a sign of one's being in Paradise

Ibn Kathīr, with reference to Imām Aḥmad, cites the following narration on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ, who says:

> "We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he said, 'A man is about to arrive who is from among the inmates of Paradise'. One of the Anṣārs arrived, from whose beard dripped fresh water of minor ablution [*wuḍū'*] and in his left hand were his shoes. The same incident occurred the following day. The same person came in front in the same condition. The same incident happened the third day. The same person entered in the condition described above. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ dissolved the assembly, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn-ul-'Āṣ ﷺ followed the Anṣārī [so as to find out the secret of his being an inmate of Paradise] and said to him: 'I had a quarrel in some matter and took an oath that I would not go home for three days. If possible, please accommodate me for three days at your home.' He agreed. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr ﷺ spent the three nights with him. But he noticed that he did not wake up for '*tahajjud*' (voluntary nightly prayers) at night. However, when he lied on bed, he recited some '*dhikr* of Allah'. Then he would wake up for *Fajr ṣalāh*. In the course of three days, he did not hear him utter a single word but that of good. 'Abdullāh ﷺ says, 'When three nights were over, and I almost thought his actions were insignificant, I gave up my secret that I had no domestic quarrel. But I continuously heard for three days the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying a man is about to arrive who is from among the inmates of Paradise'. And for three days you arrived. Therefore, I was curious to stay with you and find out your secret act, on account of which you have attained this high status. But strangely enough I did not see you do any extraordinary deed.' Then I asked him: 'What gave you this high status?' He said, 'I have no deed more than what you have seen.' I heard this and was about to return. He called me back and said: 'O Yes, there is something. I do not harbour in my heart any malice or evil against any Muslim, I am not jealous or envious of any Muslim, if Allah has given him anything good.' Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn-ul-'Āṣ ﷺ said: 'That exactly is the quality that has taken you to the lofty status.'"

Having cited this narration, Ibn Kathīr says that Nasā'ī has also cited this narration in his '*Amal-ul-Yawm wal-Laylah*' and its chain of narrators is authentic according to the standard of Bukhārī and Muslim.

All Muslims after the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār are entitled to *fai'*

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوْ مِنْ بَعْدِ هِم "And [*fai'* is also] for those who came after them ....59:10) This verse lays down that all Muslims until the Last Hour, after the noble Companions from amongst the Muhājirīn and Anṣār, are entitled to a share in the *fai'* property. This was the reason why Sayyidnā 'Umar Al-Fārūq ﷺ conquered great territories like 'Irāq, Syria, Egypt and so on, but did not distribute them among the fighters. He retained them as public endowment for next generations, so that the income might accrue to the Islamic public treasury, and the Muslims till the Last Hour may benefit from it. When some of the blessed Companions enquired about the distribution of the conquered territories, he referred to this verse and said: "Had it not been for the future generations of Muslims, I would have distributed all the conquered territories among the fighters as they were captured, following the example of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When Khaibar was conquered, the Holy Prophet ﷺ distributed all its lands. If all the lands are distributed among the present Muslim generation, nothing will be left for future generations." [Transmitted by Mālik and Qurṭubī].

Love for the Blessed Companions is a sign that the Ummah is on Truth

On this occasion, Allah has put the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ into three different categories: [1] Muhājirīn; [2] Anṣār; and [3] the general body of the Ummah. The special characteristics of the Muhājirīn and the sterling qualities of the Anṣārs are described in the relevant verses above. As for the merits of the rest of the Ummah, the verse merely mentions one quality of theirs that they recognize the high status of Muhājirīn and the Anṣār in that they had preceded them in faith and were means of communicating it to us. Further, they pray for forgiveness of all, and also pray that their own hearts be completely cleansed of all bitterness and spite towards true and sincere Muslims.

This shows that for the validity and acceptance of faith and Islam of all the coming generations of Muslims, after the blessed Companions, it is a necessary condition that they have love and respect for the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and pray for their brethren in Faith of earlier generations. Where this necessary condition is lacking, such people are not worthy of being called Muslims. Therefore, Sayyidnā Mus'ab Ibn Sa'd

رضي الله عنه says that the Muslims of this Ummah are divided into three categories, of which two categories [those of Muhājirīn and Anṣār] have already been mentioned. The third category remains. If anyone wishes to have a place in the Ummah, he should join the third category by showing love, respect and honour to the blessed Companions.

Someone approached Sayyidnā Ḥusain رضي الله عنه and inquired about Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه [who had by then been martyred], the former asked the inquirer: "Are you one of the Muhājirīn?" He replied : "No". Then he asked him: "Are you one of the Anṣār?" He replied: "No." He then said: 'There remains only the third verse اَلَّذِيْنَ جَآءُوْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ هِمْ "And... those who came after them...[59:10]": If you wish to create doubt about Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه, then you will have to leave this category as well.'

Qurṭubī says that this verse is a proof that love of the blessed Companions is obligatory. Sayyidnā Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى says that any person who reviles a Companion or holds a grudge against him, will not have a share in the *fai'* property of the Muslims. Then he argues, on the basis of this verse, that every Muslim has a share in the *fai'* property, and anyone who has no share, his faith in Islam is doubtul.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has stated that Allah has commanded all Muslims to pray for the Companions of Muḥammad ﷺ and for their forgiveness, whereas Allah knew that there would be conflicts and civil wars between them. Therefore, it is not permissible for any Muslim to hold evil thoughts about them on account of their conflicts.

Sayyidah 'Ā'shah Ṣiddīqah رضي الله عنها says, "I have heard your Holy Prophet ﷺ say that this community will not perish unless the later generations curse the earlier generations."

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه says: "When you hear anyone reviling a Companion, tell him, 'May the curse of Allah be upon the one who is the worst of you'." Obviously, no Companion can ever be worse. The one who is cursing would be the worst one. In a word, it is a cause of curse to revile a Companion.

'Amr Ibn Ḥaushab رحمه الله تعالى says: "I have found the earlier generations of this Ummah uniformly and strongly advise people to describe the merits of the noble Companions and their good qualities, so

that they may develop love for them. Do not ever talk about their conflicts and disagreements, so that people may become bold and show disrespect to them." [All these narratives have been adapted from Qurṭubī].

Verses 11 - 17

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْكِتٰبِ لَئِنْ أُخْرِجْتُمْ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا لا
وَإِنْ قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنْصُرَنَّكُمْ ط وَاللّٰهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُونَ ﴿١١﴾ لَئِنْ
أُخْرِجُوا لَا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ ج وَلَئِنْ قُوتِلُوا لَا يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ ج وَلَئِنْ
نَصَرُوهُمْ لَيُوَلُّنَّ الْأَدْبَارَ قف ثُمَّ لَا يُنْصَرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ لَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِي
صُدُورِهِمْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ ط ذٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ لَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ
جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرًى مُحَصَّنَةٍ أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ ط بَأْسُهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيدٌ ط
تَحْسَبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتّٰى ط ذٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾
كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ ج وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
﴿١٥﴾ كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ ج فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي
بَرِيءٌ مِنْكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللّٰهَ رَبَّ الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتَهُمَا
أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدَيْنِ فِيهَا ط وَذٰلِكَ جَزَاؤُا الظّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

Did you not see the hypocrites saying to their brothers who disbelieve from the people of the Book, "If you are expelled, we will certainly go out with you, and we will not obey any one about you. And if you are fought against, we will definitely help you." And Allah bears witness that they are pure liars. [11] If they are expelled, they will not go out with them, and if they are fought against, they will not help them. And even if they help them, they will surely turn their backs; then they will not be helped. [12] In fact, your fear in their hearts is greater than (that of) Allah. That is because they are a people who do not understand. [13] They do not fight you, even assembled together, but in fortified

towns, or from behind the walls. Their battle between themselves is severe. You think that they are united, while their hearts are divided. That is because they are a people who have no sense. [14] **The example (of Banū Naḍīr) is like those who were before them in near past, (i.e. the Jews of Banū Qainuqa') who tasted the evil consequence of their conduct, and for them (in the Hereafter) there is a painful punishment.** [15] **The example (of the hypocrites) is like the Shaiṭān when he says to a human being, "Become a disbeliever" then once he disbelieves, he says, "I disown you; I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds."** [16] **So the end of both of them is that they will be in the Fire, living there forever. And that is the punishment of the wrongdoers.** [17]

Commentary

كَمَثَلِ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيْبًا (...like those who were before them in near past ....59:15) This refers to the case of Banū Naḍīr, and Mujahid رحمهم الله تعالى says that the phrase الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيْبًا "those who were before them in near past " refers to the Quraish of Makkah who sustained an ignominious defeat at Badr. According to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, it refers to Banū Qainuqā', a Jewish tribe, who were punished for their mischief and machinations after Badr. Banū Naḍīr were banished after the battles of Badr and 'Uḥud, and Banū Qainuqā' had been banished after Badr. At Badr seventy thousand pagan Arabs were killed, and the survivors returned home disgracefully. Since pagans of Makkah and Banū qainuqā', both of them faced a deterrent punishment after Badr, both can be the purport of the words, 'who were before them in the past, and of : ذَاقُوْا وَبَالَ اَمْرِهِمْ "...tasted the evil consequence of their conduct...[59:15]"

The Expulsion of Banū Qainuqā'

As stated earlier, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated from Makkah and settled in Madīnah, he concluded a peace treaty with the Jewish tribes of Madīnah, and of its neighbourhood. One of its conditions stipulated that they would not fight the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Muslims, or assist their enemies. Banū Qainuqā' was a party to this peace agreement and was the first one to break the pledged word, within a few months. On the occasion of the battle of Badr, they connived with the Quraish of Makkah, and some incidents of their connivance came out in the open. On that occasion, the following verse was revealed وَاِمَّا تَخَافَنَّ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَانْۢبِذْ اِلَيْهِمْ عَلٰى سَوَآءٍ (And if you apprehend a breach from a people, then,

throw [the treaty] towards them being right forward ...[8:58]". Banū Qainuqā', through their treachery, had already broken the treaty. Therefore, The Holy Prophet ﷺ declared war against them and the banner of *jihād* was given in the hands of Sayyidnā Ḥamzah ؓ and, appointing Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah ؓ his deputy in the city of Madīnah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself joined the fighting force. Having seeing the Muslim army, the Jews shut themselves up in the fortress. The Holy Prophet ﷺ laid a siege to it for fifteen days, and the Jews had no choice but to surrender. Eventually, Allah cast terror into their hearts and they realized that fighting would not pay off. So, they opened the gate of the fortress and expressed their willingness to abide by the decision of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ decision was to have the Jewish men executed. But 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy, the hypocrite, intervened and pleaded to the Holy Prophet ﷺ to pardon them. In the end, it was decided that they should leave the area and go into exile and their belongings would be the spoils falling to the lot of the Muslims. Accordingly, they left Madīnah and proceeded to settle in an area called Adhra'āt in Syria. In compliance with the law of spoils, one-fifth was retained for *Bait-ul-Māl* [public treasury] and the rest of the spoils was disbursed among the fighters. After the battle of Badr, this was the first one-fifth of the booties that was retained for the public treasury. This incident took place on Monday, 15th Shawwāl, in the 2nd year of Hijrah - twenty months after the migration.

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ اِذْ قَالَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ (The example [of the hypocrites] is like the Shaiṭān when he says to a human being, "Become a disbeliever" then once he disbelieves, he says, "I disown you; I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds."....59:16) This is another example of the hypocrites who made false promises of solidarity and support to the Banū Naḍīr, and provoked the latter to fight against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. But when the Muslims besieged them, not a single hypocrite came forward to assist. The Qur'ān here uses a simile to illustrate the similarity between a hypocrite and the Satan. The Satan incited man to disbelieve and promised him the world, but when he was seriously involved in disbelief, he said that he has nothing to do with him. Only Allah knows how many such episodes the devil must have been involved in, textually, however, we find one such episode narrated in the Qur'ān in Sūrah Anfāl, verse [48] :

وَاِذْ زَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَ اِنِّىْ جَارٌ لَّكُمْ
فَلَمَّا تَرَآءَتِ الْفِئَتٰنِ نَكَصَ عَلٰى عَقِبَيْهِ وَقَالَ اِنِّىْ بَرِیْٓءٌ مِّنْكُمْ اِنِّیْٓ اَرٰى مَالَا تَرَوْنَ اِنِّیْٓ
اَخَافُ اللّٰهَ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ.

"And when the Satan beautified their deeds for them and said, 'None of the people is to overpower you today, and I am a protector for you.' But, when the two groups saw each other, he turned back on his heels and said, 'I have nothing to do with you. I am seeing what you do not see. I am scared of Allah, and Allah is severe in punishment.'"

This incident occurred on the occasion of the battle of Badr when the Satan misled the pagan Quraish, urged them to wage a war against Muslims, and then he withdrew, and left them in the lurch when they were in the middle of a pitched-battle. It is not clear how the Satan did all this, whether he cast suggestions into their minds or whether he came to them in human shape and spoke to them face to face. A full explanation is available in Volume [4] of Ma'āriful Qur'ān, pages 242-247.

If the verse refers to this incident, in which the Satan provokes man to disbelieve and when he does that, he washes his hands of them, it does not seem that the Satan asked them to commit *kufr*, because they were already *kāfirs*. He asked them to be firm in opposing the Messenger. The answer is all too obvious, in that it is all the same whether he asked them to commit *kufr*, or bids them to remain firm in their *kufr* or fight the Messenger of Allah, because it is also tantamount to *kufr*.

Tafsīr Maẓharī, Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr and others have cited several incidents where monks and devotees were deceived into *kufr*. For example, one of the Israeli monks devoted himself to Allah in his synagogue, and fasted consecutively and broke his fast only once in ten days. In this way, he spent seventy years of his life. The accursed Satan pursued him. He sent after him the most cunning devil in the shape of a monk, a devotee of God. He went up to him and exerted himself in the worship of God and thus built up confidence in the genuine monk. Eventually, the impostor succeeded in teaching the monk a few of the prayers that are efficacious in curing the sickly people. Then the former exerted his influence on many people to fall sick, and gave them the monk's address. When the latter recited the prayers, the devil would remove his influence and thus they would feel cured. He kept up this

process for a long period of time, until one day he performed his exertion on the beautiful daughter of an Israeli leader. He sent her also to the monk. He succeeded in getting her into his synagogue and gradually he succeeded in getting him to commit fornication with the girl who, as a result, fell pregnant. He suggested that the girl be killed to save face. After the killing, the devil himself went around telling the story of the killing and put up the people against the monk. They, in their fury, demolished the synagogue and decided to kill him and crucify him. Then the Satan went back to the monk and said to him that there is no way out to save his life. 'Of course', he said to him, 'there is one way of saving your life, in that you prostrate to me and I will save your life.' The monk had already committed all the sins. The way to commit *kufr* was paved. So, he prostrated. At that juncture, the Satan said to him plainly, 'You were not falling into my trap. I adopted all these guiles for you to commit *kufr*. I cannot assist you in any way.' This story is recounted fully in Tafsīr Maẓharī and Qurṭubī. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Verses 18 - 24

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا
اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ نَسُوا
اللّٰهَ فَاَنْسٰىهُمْ اَنْفُسَهُمْ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ لَا يَسْتَوِيْٓ
اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ وَاَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ؕ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُوْنَ
﴿٢٠﴾ لَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ عَلٰى جَبَلٍ لَّرَاَيْتَهٗ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ
خَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَتِلْكَ الْاَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾
هُوَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۚ هُوَ الرَّحْمٰنُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٢٢﴾ هُوَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ اَلْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوْسُ السَّلٰمُ
الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ ؕ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ عَمَّا
يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ هُوَ اللّٰهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْاَسْمَآءُ

الْحُسْنٰى ط يُسَبِّحُ لَهٗ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ج وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢٤﴾

O those who believe, fear Allah, and everybody must consider what he (or she) has sent ahead for tomorrow. And fear Allah. Surely Allah is fully aware of what you do. [18] **And do not be like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own selves. Those are the sinners.** [19] **The people of the Fire and the people of the Paradise are not equal. The people of the Paradise are the successful.** [20] **Had We sent down this Qur'ān to a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, burst apart out of awe for Allah. And such examples are cited by Us for the people, so that they may ponder.** [21] **He is Allah, besides whom there is no god, the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful.** [22] **He is Allah, besides whom there is no god, the Sovereign, the Most Pure [from all defects], the Most Safe [from all defects], the Peace-Giver, the Guardian, the All-Mighty, the Restorer [of the losses], the Lord of Greatness. Pure is Allah from what they associate with Him.** [23] **He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Originator-Of-Shapes. His are the Most Beautiful Names. His purity is proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.** [24]

Commentary

The Command to Taqwā and to prepare for the Day of Resurrection

The earlier parts of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr has described different events relating to the Jews, the pagans and the hypocrites and their punishments in this world and in the next. Now the concluding part of the Sūrah makes the believers conscious of their duty towards Allah and advises them to perform the righteous deeds regularly.

The first verse in this set reads يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ (O those who believe, fear Allah, and everybody must consider what he [or she] has sent ahead for tomorrow. ....59:18) In an eloquent style, the verse enjoins upon the believers to take care of the Hereafter and commands them to prepare for it. Here a few points need to be considered:

First: In this verse, the Hereafter is described as *ghad* [tomorrow], which means the 'day after today'. This points to two things. First of all, it means that the entire period of this world, compared to the Hereafter, is very short. That is, this entire world, in relation to the Hereafter, is like one day. In fact, in terms of pure calculation, this comparison too is difficult to imagine, because the Hereafter is eternal which will exist without an end. The age of human world is said to be a few thousand years old. If this is calculated with the creation of the heaven and the earth, it will extend to a few million years, which in any case will be a limited period. This is no comparison to an unlimited or infinite period of time. Some Traditions state اَلدُّنْيَا يَوْمٌ وَّلَنَا فِيْهِ صَوْمٌ (The entire world is a day and on that day we fast.) Whether we calculate from human creation or from the creation of the heaven and the earth, it does not matter, because neither of these factors is important for a human individual. In fact, every individual's world is made up of the days and years of his age. Every person should be able to realize how short a period that is in relation to the eternity of the Hereafter.

Second of all, this verse shows that the Day of Resurrection is as certain as the arrival of tomorrow after today which is a stark reality, and no one doubts it. Likewise the Hereafter is beyond any reasonable doubt.

Thirdly, the Day of Resurrection will happen very shortly. Just as tomorrow is not very far away from today, it is thought to be very near, likewise, the Day of Resurrection will happen very soon after this world. The first phase of the Hour is when an individual dies, his Hour is already established as stated in a Tradition: 'مَنْ مَّاتَ فَقَدْ قَامَتْ قِيَامَتُه "He who dies, his Day of Judgement has been established" because the signs of the next world start from the grave and examples of reward and punishment come forward. The world of grave or the world of *barzakh* is like a waiting room in this world which accommodates all types of people, ranging from the first class to the third class. The waiting room of the criminals is the prison house. A person should be able to determine his position and status in the waiting room. Therefore, every person's Judgement Day starts with his death. Man's death has been made such a puzzling phenomenon that not even the greatest philosopher or scientist can with any degree of certainty determine the exact time of its occurrence. In fact, every coming moment is fraught with the danger that one may not live to see it,

especially in this time and age when it is moving at the pace of lightning and heart-failure is the order of the day. The second phase of the Hour is when the entire world, the heaven and earth and everything else, will perish, though this might take place after hundreds of thousands of years, it is very close in relation to the eternity of the Hereafter .

In short, this verse by describing *qiyāmah* [Doomsday] as *ghad* [tomorrow] made man conscious of the fact that the Doomsday is not very far off; it is very close like tomorrow. It is also possible that it might come even before tomorrow.

The second point put by this verse for consideration is that the arrival of Doomsday being certain and also near, everyone is invited to think what he has prepared for the Day of Resurrection. This shows that his original abode is the Hereafter. His residence in this world is like a wayfarer. It is necessary to send something from here for the eternal abode. The main purpose of man's residence is to live here, acquire and accumulate things and send them forward to the eternal abode of the Hereafter. It is quite obvious that no material wealth or property can be taken with from this world. There is only one way of transferring wealth [gold, silver, money and so on] from one country to another, that is to deposit it into the bank from where the currency of another country is obtained. In exactly the same manner, wealth is spent in the way of Allah and the sacred laws of Allah are implemented and deposited in the Divinely celestial bank, where the currency of reward is recorded in the celestial Account-Book. When a believer reaches the eternal abode, it is handed over to him without claim or demand.

The phrase مَاقَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ 'what he (or she) has sent ahead' carries the general sense of the good, as well as, the bad deeds. He who sends forth good deeds will obtain the currency of reward in the Hereafter; and he who sends forth evil deeds will be indicted in the Hereafter. The command of "...fear Allah...[18]" has been repeated. It could be for emphasis, or the first of such command is for man to fulfil the obligatory and imperative duties, and the repetition of the command is to abstain from sins. The second explanation is given by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī رحمه الله تعالى.

Also, it is possible that the first command to fear Allah is to send forth good deeds for the Hereafter by acting upon imperatives set by Allah, and

the second command to fear is to ensure that what is being sent is not fake or counterfeit. Fake or counterfeit deeds, in relation to the Hereafter, would imply the deeds done seem to be genuinely righteous deeds, but they lack sincerity of purpose and the good pleasure of Allah. What was done ostentatiously or for ulterior motive or an ostensible action that seems like an act of worship, but having no base in religion, it is tantamount to innovation (*Bid'ah*). Thus the second command to fear Allah implies that for the Hereafter it is not sufficient to merely accumulate ostensible actions, but to send forth genuine deeds performed with sincerity according to the rules set in religion. Spurious actions will not be acceptable there.

فَاَنْسٰىهُمْ اَنْفُسَهُمْ (...so He made them forget their own selves....59:19) It means they did not forget Allah but themselves, because they are unaware of their own loss and gain.

لَوْاَنْزَلْنَا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ عَلٰى جَبَلٍ (Had We sent down this Qur'ān to a mountain, ...59:21) This is a parable that Allah is using to illustrate the fact that if the Holy Qur'ān were to be revealed on such strong, firm and unmovable mountain and endowed with intelligence like man, it would have submitted to the greatness of the Qur'ān, nay, it would have crushed to pieces. But man is too selfish and proud. As a result, he has lost his natural intelligence and remains unaffected by the powerful message of the Qur'ān. This, it would appear, is a hypothetical example, that is 'if' mountains had sense or intelligence. Some scholars have stated that reason and revelation both bear testimony to the fact that everything in nature has sense, perception and intelligence, be it a mountain or a tree. Therefore, this is not a hypothetical example. It is a stark reality. [Maẓharī]. And Allah knows best!

A Few of Allah's Attributes of Perfection

Having urged the people to be concerned about the Hereafter and having asserted the greatness of the Qur'ān, this Sūrah is concluded with a few of Allah's attributes of perfection, as follows:

عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ (...the Knower of the unseen and the seen - 23). The attribute 'the Knower of the Unseen and the seen' means that Allah knows all things, visible or invisible.

اَلْقُدُّوْسُ The attribute Al-Quddūs means 'the Most Pure from all defects',

that is, Allah is the Being Who is free from all kinds of defect, deficiency and imperfection which are not in conformity to His Supreme status.

الْمُؤْمِن The word *mu'min,* when applied to a human being, means a believer, but when this attribute is applied to Allah, it means the one who provides peace and safety, as explained by Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. It means that He provides safety and perfect peace to those who believe in Allah and His Messengers.

الْمُهَيْمِن The attribute *Al-Muhaimin*, according to Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Mujāhid and Qatādah means 'Guardian'. The Arabic lexicon Al-Qamus has explained that its route is '*hamn*' which means 'to look after or take care of or watch over'. [Maẓharī].

اَلْعَزِيْز The attribute Al-'Azīz means 'the Almighty'.

اَلْجَبَّار The attribute Al-Jabbār means the One who is dominant. It could also be derived from the word *jabr*, meaning to 'join broken bones' and thus we have the word *jabīrah*, which refers to the bandage or plaster that is used in binding the broken bones. From this point of view, the attribute would mean that Allah is the Being Who sets aright every broken and useless things, matters or restores all losses and rectifies situations or mends every breakage.

اَلْمُتَكَبِّر The attribute *Al-Mutakabbir* [the Lord of Greatness] is derived from *takabbur* and that from *kibriyā'* meaning 'greatness' which is one of the peculiar characteristics of Allah. It implies that every greatness is attributable only to Allah who is not in need of anyone. Whoever is in need cannot be great. Therefore, if this word is used for a person other than Allah, it is a defect and sin, because the claim of greatness by a person who is not actually great is false and tantamount to a claim of being a partner of Allah, the Besought of all, in one of His exclusive attributes. That is why the word *Al-Mutakabbir,* when attributed to Allah is an attribute of perfection, but in respect of others it is no more than a false claim.

اَلْمُصَوِّر (...the Originator of all Shapes....59:24) In other words, He gives shape to every thing He creates. He has given particular shapes to all creatures whereby they are distinguished from one another. Every species has a shape distinguishable from all other species. Within one species too,

there are differences in shape between males and females. Then there are uncountable differences between the shapes of the individuals of even one sex. The excellence of shaping or fashioning is of such high degree that the shapes of zillions of men and women are different from one another in a way that no face is an absolute copy of some other face. Had it not been so, no one could be distinguished from the other. This excellence and perfection of creative power belongs to none but Allah. Just as *takabbur* (show of greatness) is not permissible for anyone other than Allah [as *kibriyā'* is His exclusive attribute'], likewise no one, besides Allah, is permitted to do picture-making, because that too is the exclusive characteristic of Allah, and picture-making is an implied claim of being associate with Allah in this attribute.

لَهُ الْاَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنٰى (... His are the Most Beautiful Names ....59:24). The Holy Qur'ān has not given the exact number of these Most Beautiful Names of Allah. Authentic Prophetic *aḥādīth* have counted them ninety-nine. Tirmidhī has collected all the ninety-nine names in one Tradition. Many scholars have written full books on the subject of *Asmā'ul-Ḥusnā* or 'Most Beautiful Names of Allah'. The present writer has also compiled a concise monograph on the subject of 'Most Beautiful Names of Allah' published as an annexure to Munājāt-i-Maqbūl (by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالیٰ)

يُسَبِّحُ لَهٗ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ (...His purity is proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and the earth ....59:24). That all creatures in the heavens and the earth declare the purity of Allah in unuttered language is self-evident: The wonderful, marvelous and amazing things created by Allah, and the awe-inspiring and staggering shapes fashioned by Him proclaim the praises of their Creator in unuttered language. However, it is possible too that the word '*tasbīḥ*' is used here in its real and literal sense, because according to the authentic view everything in this universe has some kind of sense that accords to its ability. Now, the foremost and primary requirement of this sense is to recognize one's Creator and paying gratitude to Him. Based on this premise, it is not far-fetched to conceive that everything in nature really declares the purity of Allah in articulate language, though human ears might not be able to hear it. Thus the Qur'ān on one occasion says وَلٰكِنْ لَّا تَفْقَهُوْنَ تَسْبِيْحَهُمْ (...but you do not understand their extolling.) (17:44)

Benefits and Blessings of the Concluding Verses of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr

It is recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Ma'qil Ibn Yasār ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has stated that Allah appoints 70,000 angels who pray for Divine mercy for anyone who recites the following three times: اَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ السَّمِيْعِ الْعَلِيْمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ and the last three verses of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr هُوَاللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّاهُوَ. If he dies the same day, he will attain the status of a martyr. If a person recites the same solemn words in the evening, he will attain the same status. [Maẓharī].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥashr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mumtaḥinah

(The Examiner)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 13 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّخِذُوْا عَدُوِّيْ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ اَوْلِيَآءَ تُلْقُوْنَ اِلَيْهِمْ
بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوْا بِمَا جَآءَكُمْ مِّنَ الْحَقِّ ۚ يُخْرِجُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلَ
وَاِيَّاكُمْ اَنْ تُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِيْ سَبِيْلِيْ
وَابْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِيْ تُسِرُّوْنَ اِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ ۖ وَاَنَا اَعْلَمُ بِمَآ اَخْفَيْتُمْ
وَمَآ اَعْلَنْتُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَّفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَآءَ السَّبِيْلِ ﴿١﴾ اِنْ
يَّثْقَفُوْكُمْ يَكُوْنُوْا لَكُمْ اَعْدَآءً وَّيَبْسُطُوْٓا اِلَيْكُمْ اَيْدِيَهُمْ وَاَلْسِنَتَهُمْ
بِالسُّوْٓءِ وَوَدُّوْا لَوْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ اَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَآ
اَوْلَادُكُمْ ۚ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۚ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ
﴿٣﴾ قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِيْٓ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَالَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗ ۚ اِذْ قَالُوْا
لِقَوْمِهِمْ اِنَّا بُرَءٰٓؤُا مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ز كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ
وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَآءُ اَبَدًا حَتّٰى تُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَحْدَهٗٓ
اِلَّا قَوْلَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ لِاَبِيْهِ لَاَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ وَمَآ اَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ ۗ رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ اَنَبْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٤﴾ رَبَّنَا لَا

تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ
﴿٥﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٦﴾

O you who believe, do not take My enemies and your enemies for friends, expressing love with them, while they have rejected the Truth that has come to you, expelling the Messenger and your selves (from Makkah), merely because you have faith in Allah, your Lord, if you have set out to do *jihād* (struggle) in My way, and to seek My pleasure. You express love with them secretly, while I know what you have concealed and what you have revealed. And any of you who does this has missed the straight path. [1] **Should they have access to you, they will become your enemies, and will stretch their hands and tongues towards you with evil; and they desire that you should reject the (True) faith.** [2] **Neither your womb-relations nor your children will avail you on the Day of Judgment. He will decide between you, and Allah is watchful of what you do.** [3] **Indeed, there is an excellent example for you in Ibrāhīm and those with him, when they said to their people, "We disown you and what you worship instead of Allah. We disbelieve in you. Enmity and hatred has arisen between us and you forever, unless you believe in Allah alone", - but (his example is) not (to be followed) in what Ibrāhīm said to his father, "I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness, and I have no power from Allah (to do any thing) for you." - "O our Lord, in you alone we trust, and to you alone we turn for help, and to you is the final return.** [4] **Our Lord, do not make us persecuted by those who disbelieve, and forgive us, our Lord! You, only You, are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."** [5] **Indeed, for you there is an excellent example in them, for anyone who hopes (to meet) Allah and the Last Day. And whoever turns away, then Allah is Free of all needs, Worthy of all Praise.** [6]

Commentary

The Sūrah opens with a prohibitory injunction to Muslims against having close and intimate friendship with disbelievers and those who

associate partners with Allah. This injunction was revealed in the context of a particular incident which is mentioned below:

Background of Revelation

The *tafsīr* of Qurṭubī, with reference to Qushairi and Tha'labī, records that after the battle of Badr, before the Conquest of Makkah, a Makkan female vocalist whose name was Sārah, first arrived in Madīnah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked her whether she had migrated to Madīnah. She replied in the negative. Then he asked her whether she had embraced Islam. Again her reply was in the negative. Then he asked her to explain the reason why she arrived in Madīnah. She explained, 'You belong to the high society of Makkah and I used to do my living amongst you. The great leaders of Makkah were killed in the battle of Badr, and you have moved here. My living has become impossible. I am down-and-out and hard-pressed. I have come to you for help.' The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to her, 'You are a professional female singer of Makkah and where are the Makkan youngsters who used to shower money on you?' She said that after the battle of Badr all her functions and singing sessions had come to an end. "Since that time", she said, "nobody has invited me." The Holy Prophet ﷺ encouraged Banū 'Abd-ul-Muṭṭalib to assist her. They helped her with money, clothing and other things and sent her off.

This happened at a time when the pagans of Makkah had failed to honour the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was making secret preparations to march on Makkah. He had also prayed to Allah that his secret plan must not be prematurely divulged to the people of Makkah. However, from amongst the foremost *Muhājirīn* (Refugees) there was a Companion Sayyidnā Ḥāṭib Ibn Abī Balta'ah رضي الله عنه. He was originally from Yemen, who had settled in Makkah where he had no relatives and had embraced Islam. After migration, he settled in Madīnah, but his family was still in Makkah. The pagans of Makkah used to persecute the Muslims tortuously who had remained in Makkah after the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and his blessed Companions migrated to Madīnah. The Refugees who had relatives in Makkah had some degree of protection. But Sayyidnā Ḥāṭib Ibn Abī Balta'ah رضي الله عنه was worried that he had no relatives to protect his family from the persecution. He seized this opportunity to have his family protected from Makkan persecution. So, he

thought if he did a favor to the Makkans, they would feel obliged to him, and in return they will take care of his family and protect them.

Sayyidnā Ḥāṭib Ibn Abī Balta'ah ؓ was sure that Allah would grant victory to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and leaking the secret information would not harm the Holy Prophet ﷺ or Islam. He thought if he were to write a letter and inform the Makkans that the Holy Prophet ﷺ intends to attack them, his children would be safe. He thus committed the mistake of writing a letter to the people of Makkah telling them the intention of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to invade upon Makkah. He dispatched the letter with the singing woman, Sārah, who was on her way to Makkah. [Qurṭubī and Maẓharī].

Allah Ta'ālā informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ about it through revelation, and he was also informed that the bearer of the letter, a woman, has reached the place known as *Rauḍah Khākh*. According to a narration in the two Ṣaḥīḥs on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ called for him, Abū Marthad and Zubair Ibn 'Awwām ؓ and commanded them to ride their horses and pursue the woman who would be found in Rauḍah Khākh. He said: "There you will find a pagan woman bearing a letter from Sayyidnā Ḥāṭib Ibn Abī Balta'ah ؓ addressed to the pagans of Makkah. Overtake her and bring back the letter." The Companions, in pursuance of the command, galloped on their horses and went after the woman and found her in the place where the Holy Prophet ﷺ had named. She was seen there riding a camel. They made the camel sit and searched for the letter, but to no avail. They said to themselves that she must have the letter with her because the information of the Holy Prophet ﷺ could never be wrong. She must have hidden it somewhere. They asked her to produce the letter, but she denied any knowledge of it. They then had to adopt a sterner attitude and threatened to remove all her clothes, if she did not surrender the letter. When she saw their determination, she produced it from her loincloth. The letter was brought back to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When Sayyidnā 'Umar Al-Fārūq ؓ heard the story, he exclaimed seeking the Holy Prophet's ﷺ permission to behead the one who betrayed Allah, His Messenger and all the Muslims.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked Sayyidnā Ḥāṭib Ibn Abī Balta'ah ؓ: 'O Ḥāṭib! What has prompted you to do this?' Sayyidnā Ḥāṭib Ibn Abī

Balta'ah ؓ replied that his faith was not shaken in the least. He explained that he intended to do a favor to the residents of Makkah, so that they might not harm his family. He pleaded that all other *muhājirīn* (Emigrants) had their clans in Makkah, while his family had no one to take care of them.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to his Companions: "He has told you the truth." Sayyidnā 'Umar Al-Fārūq ؓ was not convinced on account of his zeal of faith, and repeated his request to kill him. The Holy Prophet ﷺ put forward more compelling arguments. He said:

> 'He attended Badr. What can I tell you, perhaps Allah looked at those who attended Badr and said, "O People of Badr, do what you like, for I have forgiven you.'

Having heard this, tears rolled down from Sayyidnā 'Umar's ؓ eyes and he said: "Allah and His Messenger alone has the knowledge of reality." [This narration of Bukhārī is recorded in the Book of Mghāzī: The Battle of Badr, as quoted by Ibn Kathīr]. Some of the versions also have the additional statement of Sayyidnā Ḥāṭib Ibn Abī Balta'ah ؓ: "I never did this to harm Islam or the Muslims because I knew for sure that Allah will grant victory to the Holy Prophet ﷺ irrespective of whether or not the Makkans came to know about the impending attack."

It was with reference to this incident that Allah revealed the opening verses of Sūrah Al-Mumtaḥinah forbidding the Muslims vehemently to have friendly relations with the infidels.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّخِذُوْا عَدُوِّىْ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ اَوْلِيَآءَ تُلْقُوْنَ اِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ (O you who believe, do not take My enemies and your enemies for friends, expressing love with them...60:1). The immediate occasion of the revelation of the verse under comment was the incident stated earlier. Such a letter written to the disbelievers amounted to having friendly intimacy with them. This verse uses the expression عَدُوِّىْ وَ عَدُوَّكُمْ "My enemy and your enemy" instead of *kuffār* [infidels] presumably to indicate the underlying cause of the injunction, in that hopes of friendship from your enemy and Allah's enemy are illusory. It needs to be avoided. Furthermore, this expression is an indication that an infidel, as long as he is an infidel, can never be a friend of a Muslim as long as he is a Muslim. An infidel is the enemy of Allah, whereas a Muslim loves Allah. How can there be an intimate

friendship between the two?

وَقَدْ كَفَرُوْا بِمَا جَآءَ كُمْ مِّنَ الْحَقِّ ۚ يُخْرِجُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلَ وَاِيَّاكُمْ اَنْ تُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ رَبِّكُمْ (...while they have rejected the Truth that has come to you, expelling the Messenger and your selves [from Makkah], merely because you have faith in Allah, your Lord...60:1). The word *ḥaqq* [truth] refers either to the Qur'ān or to Islam. This part of the verse refers to their *kufr* (rejection of Truth) as the real reason of their enmity. Then it points out even to their hostile attitude, proved on the ground, that they drove the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his followers out of their dear homes, not for any worldly grudge, but for one and only one reason, that is, their faith. Thus it becomes clear that believers as long as they are believers, the non-believers cannot be their intimate friends. This also clarifies that the position Ḥāṭib ؓ had taken was inappropriate. He was wrong in his thinking that if he did them a favor, they would be obliged to him and take care of his family, because they were enemies of the faith. Unless [God forbid!] one loses one's faith, the hope of friendly intimacy with the enemies of Allah is illusory and virtually impossible.

اِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِيْ سَبِيْلِيْ وَابْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِيْ (...if you have set out to do *jihād* (struggle) in My way, and to seek My pleasure...60:1). This statement also points out that if the migration was indeed for the sake of Allah and His good pleasure, it is impossible for an infidel, the enemy of Allah, to take care of Allah's friend.

تُسِرُّوْنَ اِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ ۖ وَاَنَا اَعْلَمُ بِمَا اَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا اَعْلَنْتُمْ (...You express love with them secretly, while I know what you have concealed and what you have revealed ....60:1). This statement makes it clear that anyone who secretly maintains a friendly intimacy with the unbelievers should not think that it will remain secret. Allah is fully aware of what people do secretly and openly, as it happened in the story recounted above. Allah informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ by revelation and had the secret plot thwarted.

اِنْ يَّثْقَفُوْكُمْ يَكُوْنُوْا لَكُمْ اَعْدَآءً وَّيَبْسُطُوْٓا اِلَيْكُمْ اَيْدِيَهُمْ وَاَلْسِنَتَهُمْ بِالسُّوْٓءِ (Should they have access to you, they will become your enemies, and will stretch their hands and tongues towards you with evil;...60:2). The verse indicates how bitter are the feelings of disbelievers towards Muslims. They would use all means, their hands and their tongues, and would spare no effort to harm the Muslims. Therefore, it is impossible that when they find an

opportunity in their favor and overpower Muslims, they will ever exercise tolerance towards them.

وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ (...and they desire that you should reject the (true) faith...60:2). The greatest desire of the non-believers' hearts is to see the Muslims revert to disbelief. Thus when the Muslims stretch their hand of friendship towards them, it will be at the cost of their belief. They will never be happy with the Muslims unless they give up their faith.

لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ اَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُكُمْ ۚ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ (Neither your womb-relations nor your children will avail you on the Day of Judgment. He will decide between you, and Allah is watchful of what you do...60:3). The verse refutes the plea of Sayyidnā Ḥāṭib ﷺ He did what he did for the love of his children, but they will be of no help on the Day of Resurrection. All relations on that day will come to an end. Parents will flee from their children, and children from their parents, and no secret will ever remain hidden from Allah.

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِيْٓ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ......حَتّٰى تُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَحْدَهٗ (Indeed, there is an excellent example for you in Ibrāhīm and those with him, when they said to their people, "We disown you and what you worship instead of Allah. We disbelieve in you. Enmity and hatred has arisen between us and you forever, unless you believe in Allah alone",...60:4). This verse supports and emphasizes the abstaining from maintaining close friendly relations with non-believers. This rule of law is illustrated by the excellent example of Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام whose entire family worshipped idols, but he not only washed his hands of them and disowned them, but also announced, and erected a wall of, enmity and hatred with them for ever, unless and until they give up idol-worship and have belief in Allah alone.

Allaying a Doubt

The current verse emphasizes that Muslims should follow the excellent model of Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and, it is established in Sūrah Taubah and in other places in the Qur'ān that, he prayed for the forgiveness of his father who was an idol-worshipper. This could create doubt that, in pursuance of the command of Allah to follow the example of Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, it is permitted to pray for the forgiveness of one's parents or other relatives who are idol-worshippers. But the later part of Verse [4] makes an exception to the command of following Ibrāhīm عليه السلام.

اِلَّا قَوْلَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ لِاَبِيْهِ لَاَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ (...but [his example is] not [to be followed] in what Ibrāhīm said to his father, "I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness... 60:4). This implies that it is imperative to follow the model of Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام in all respects, except in the case of prayer for his father's forgiveness. It is not permitted to emulate his *sunnah* in this respect. His reason for praying for his father's forgiveness has been explained in Sūrah Taubah. He prayed for his father's forgiveness before the prohibitory injunction was ordained, or probably when he felt that faith has entered into his father's heart, but when it became plain to him that he was Allah's enemy he washed his hands of him and disowned him, thus فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهٗٓ اَنَّهٗ عَدُوٌّ لِّلّٰهِ تَبَرَّاَ مِنْهُ (...and when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he renounced him....9:114)

Some of the scholars analyze the phrase اِلَّا قَوْلَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ (but not in what Ibrāhīm said ...) grammatically as *istithna' munqaṭi'*, that is, exceptive sentence in which the exception is severed from, or wholly different in kind from, the general term. In terms of this grammatical analysis, praying for his father's forgiveness is not contrary to Abrahamic model. Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was under the impression that his father had become a Muslim, so he prayed for the forgiveness of his Muslim father. Later when he learnt the truth, he gave up praying for him and renounced him. If anyone believes, even today, that a particular unbeliever has most probably embraced Islam, there is no harm in praying for his pardon. [Qurṭubī]. Allah knows best!

Verses 7 - 9

عَسَى اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ مَّوَدَّةً ۭ وَاللّٰهُ
قَدِيْرٌ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٧﴾ لَا يَنْهٰىكُمُ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوْكُمْ
فِي الدِّيْنِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ اَنْ تَبَرُّوْهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوْٓا
اِلَيْهِمْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ اِنَّمَا يَنْهٰىكُمُ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ
قٰتَلُوْكُمْ فِي الدِّيْنِ وَاَخْرَجُوْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظٰهَرُوْا عَلٰٓي
اِخْرَاجِكُمْ اَنْ تَوَلَّوْهُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّتَوَلَّهُمْ فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾

Hopefully Allah will bring about love between you and those of them with whom you have enmity. And Allah is Powerful, and Allah is Most-forgiving, Very-Merciful. [7] **Allah does not forbid you from doing good and justice to those who did not fight you because of faith, and did not expel you from your homes. Surely Allah loves those who maintain justice.** [8] **Allah forbids you only from having friendship with those who fought you on account of faith, and expelled you from your homes, and helped (others) in expelling you. And those who develop friendship with them, it is they who are the wrongdoers.** [9]

Commentary

The preceding verses vehemently prohibited Muslims to maintain any friendly intimacy with non-believers, even though they had very near blood relationships with them. The noble Companions used to carry out the commands of Allah and His Messenger in letter and spirit. In this matter, they did not care about their personal desires, or about their near and dear ones. This command was also carried out with the result that in some homes the father was a Muslim and the son was an unbeliever or *vice versa.* Friendly relations were severed. Obviously, this situation was not easy for their human nature. That is why Allah gives them the assurance that soon the hardship will be over.

According to some *aḥādīth*, when a servant of Allah gives up his favorite thing for the sake of Allah, Allah delivers it to him in a lawful manner, and at times he is granted something better than it.

The present verses give an indication that those who are implacable enemies of Muslims because of their disbelief would soon become their friends. In other words, Allah will grant the enemies the ability to embrace the Faith and thus restore the mutual relationships. This prophecy was fulfilled on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah when, besides the unbelievers who were killed, the rest of the people became Muslims. [Maẓharī]. The Holy Qur'ān describes it thus يَدْخُلُوْنَ فِيْ دِيْنِ اللّٰهِ اَفْوَاجًا (...and you see people entering Allah's [approved] religion in multitudes..) [110:2]

It is recorded in Sahih of Bukhari, on the authority of Sayyidah Asmā' bint Abū Bakr ﷺ, that her mother arrived in Madīnah from

Makkah in the state of disbelief. According to a narration in Musnad of Aḥmad, this incident occurred when peace treaty of Ḥudaibiyah with the Makkan Quraish had been concluded and was in force. Her mother's name was Qutailah. She brought gifts for her daughter Sayyidah Asmā' رضي الله عنها, but she refused to accept them. She did not even allow her to enter her house unless she sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidah Asmā' رضي الله عنها asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ how to treat her mother who came to her while still disbeliever. The Holy Prophet ﷺ advised her to treat her kindly, politely and courteously. On that occasion, the following verse was revealed لَا يَنْهٰكُمُ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوْكُمْ فِي الدِّيْنِ (Allah does not forbid you from doing good and justice to those who did not fight you because of faith ....60:8)

Some reports indicate that Sayyidah Asmā''s رضي الله عنها mother Qutailah was divorced by Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه in the Days of Ignorance. Sayyidah Asmā''s sister, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, was born of the second wife of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, namely, Umm Rūmān, who had embraced Islam. [Ibn Kathīr and Maẓharī].

The verse directs that justice and good behavior should be maintained with those unbelievers who did not fight the Muslims. As for justice, it is obligatory to maintain with every non-Muslim, whether he is a citizen of an Islamic State, or the Muslims have peace agreement with him, or a citizen of an un-Islamic State, even though he is at war with Muslims. Rather, Islam enjoins upon Muslims to do justice even to animals. We are not allowed to lay a burden on them more than they can bear. We need to take care of their fodder and comfort. The focus of the verse, therefore, is upon the direction that they should be treated, not only with justice, but also in good and courteous manner.

Ruling

This verse proves that optional charities may be spent on non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic State and on non-Muslims with whom the Muslims have a peace pact. It is, however, forbidden to spend on non-believers who are at war with Muslims.

اِنَّمَا يَنْهٰكُمُ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ قٰتَلُوْكُمْ فِي الدِّيْنِ وَاَخْرَجُوْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظٰهَرُوْا عَلٰٓى اِخْرَاجِكُمْ اَنْ تَوَلَّوْهُمْ (Allah forbids you only from having friendship with those who fought you on account of faith, and expelled you from your homes, and helped

(others) in expelling you....60:9) This verse speaks of those unbelievers who fought the Muslims in the matter of religion, drove them from their homes or supported their expulsion. These are hostile disbelievers and the Divine injunction in connection with them is to abstain from having friendly or cordial intimacy with them. This verse does not forbid just and kind treatment of them. It merely forbids friendly intimacy and relations. Prohibition of having such friendly intimacy is not restricted only to those enemies who actively wage war against Muslims, but it is extended to *ahludh- dhimmah* [non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic State] and to *ahluṣ-sulḥ* [non-Muslims with whom there is a peace pact]. Intimate and heart-felt friendship is not allowed with them too. On the basis of this juristic principle, Maẓharī has ruled that justice, equity and fairness are necessary even with the hostile disbelievers who are at war with Muslims. Prohibition applies only in the case of cordial and friendly intimacy, not in the case of courteous attitude and kindness. This shows that it is permissible to be polite and courteous to those hostile enemies who are at war with Muslims. However, treating them with tenderness and courtesy should not cause danger, threat, harm or loss to Muslims. Wherever courtesy or tenderness might pose such a danger, it is not permitted to be tender or courteous towards them. Of course, justice and equity in all cases and under all circumstances are necessary and imperative. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!]

Verses 10 - 13

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا جَآءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنٰتُ مُهٰجِرٰتٍ فَامْتَحِنُوْهُنَّ ؕ
اَللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِاِيْمَانِهِنَّ ۚ فَاِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوْهُنَّ مُؤْمِنٰتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوْهُنَّ اِلَى
الْكُفَّارِ ؕ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّوْنَ لَهُنَّ ؕ وَاٰتُوْهُمْ مَّآ اَنْفَقُوْا ؕ
وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ اَنْ تَنْكِحُوْهُنَّ اِذَآ اٰتَيْتُمُوْهُنَّ اُجُوْرَهُنَّ ؕ وَلَا
تُمْسِكُوْا بِعِصَمِ الْكَوَافِرِ وَسْئَلُوْا مَآ اَنْفَقْتُمْ وَلْيَسْئَلُوْا مَآ اَنْفَقُوْا ؕ
ذٰلِكُمْ حُكْمُ اللّٰهِ ؕ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿۱۰﴾ وَاِنْ
فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ اِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَاقَبْتُمْ فَاٰتُوا الَّذِيْنَ ذَهَبَتْ

أَزْوَاجُهُم مِّثْلَ مَآ أَنفَقُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِيٓ أَنتُم بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾
يٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَآءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلٰٓى أَن لَّا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ
شَيْئًا وَّلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلٰدَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتٰنٍ
يَّفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِينَكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ
وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَئِسُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَئِسَ
الْكُفَّارُ مِنْ أَصْحٰبِ الْقُبُورِ ﴿١٣﴾

O you who believe, when the believing women come to you as *emigrants*, put them to a test. Allah knows best about their faith. So, if you find them faithful, do not send them back to the disbelievers. Neither these (women) are lawful for them, nor are those (disbelievers) lawful for these (women). And give them (the disbelievers) that (dower) which they had paid (to these women). And there is no sin for you if you marry them, when you give them their dowers. And do not hold on to the ties of marriage with the disbelieving women, and ask (their new non-muslim husbands to pay to you) that (dower) which you had paid (to such women), and they (the previous non-muslim husbands of the Muslim women) should ask (their new Muslim husbands) to pay that (dower) which they had paid (to their previous wives). That is the decision of Allah. He decides between you. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [10] **And if some of your (non-muslim) wives have slipped from you, (and their present non-muslim husbands do not pay to you the dower as aforesaid,) and you have your turn (of paying dower to the previous non-muslim husbands of your present wives), then (instead of paying dower to them,) give those whose wives have slipped the like amount of what they had paid (to them). And fear Allah, the One in whom you believe.** [11]

O Prophet, when the believing women come to you, seeking *bai'ah* (a pledge of allegiance) with you that they will not ascribe any thing as a partner to Allah, and will not commit theft, and will not commit

fornication, and will not kill their children, and will not come up with a calumny that they falsely attribute between their hands and their feet, and will not disobey you in what is recognized (in Sharī'ah), then effect *bai'ah* with them (i.e. accept their pledge) and pray Allah for their forgiveness. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [12]

O you who believe, do not have friendship with a people with whom Allah is angry. They have despaired from the Hereafter as the infidels have despaired from those (buried) in the graves. [13]

Commentary

Cause of Revelation

Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah and an Analysis of some of its Clauses

These verses are related to the event of the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah which was discussed at legnth in Sūrah Al-Fatḥ. After protracted negotiation, a treaty was concluded between the Quraish of Makkah and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for ten years. Some of the terms of the treaty were accepted only under pressure and the Muslims apparently felt subdued and thus were greatly disturbed. Therefore, the noble Companions expressed extreme grief and indignation but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was working under Divine direction, in that the temporary feeling of defeat is actually a prelude to 'a clear victory', so he conceded to the fragile terms and conditions of the treaty, and eventually the blessed Companions also accepted.

One of the terms of the treaty was that if any person goes away to Madīnah from Makkah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ will send him back to Makkah, but if any person goes away to Makkah from Madīnah, he will not be returned. The wordings of this clause are general, apparently covering both men and women. In other words, if a Muslim man or woman goes to the Holy Prophet ﷺ from Makkah, he shall send him or her back.

The treaty had hardly been concluded while the Holy Prophet ﷺ was still in Ḥudaibiyah, several incidents occurred that were trying for the Muslims. One such incident was that of Sayyidnā Abū Jandal رضي الله عنه who was imprisoned and held captive by the pagan Quraish in Makkah.

Somehow he managed to escape and appeared before the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the Muslim camp with his feet in fetters. When the blessed Companions saw him, they were totally puzzled. They felt that he should be returned in terms of the treaty but, on the other hand, they thought it would be improper for them to hand their oppressed brother back to the oppressive enemies. But the Holy Prophet ﷺ had already concluded the treaty and the protection and firmness of the principles of Sharī'ah could not be sacrificed on account of an individual. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was, at the same time, foresighted and farsighted. He could foresee the victory of the oppressed Muslims and their salvage very soon. The Holy Prophet ﷺ for sure must have felt natural grief about returning Sayyidnā Abū Jandal رضي الله عنه, but as he was bound by the terms of the treaty, he explained to him the situation and sent him off.

A similar incident was that of Sayyidah Sa'īdah bint al-Ḥārith al-Aslamiyyah رضي الله عنها, a Muslim lady. She was married to Ṣaifi Ibn Anṣab who was a non-believer. Some reports give his name as Musāfir al-Makhzūmī. Up to this point, marriage relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims was not forbidden. This Muslim lady escaped from Makkah and went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The husband followed her and demanded that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should restore his wife to him because he [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] has accepted this condition and the seal of the treaty is still fresh. On that occasion, the above verses were revealed, which declare that marriage tie between Muslims and idol-worshippers is forbidden. Consequently, if a Muslim lady, whether her Islam was known from beforehand, as in the case of Sayyidah Sa'īdah bint al-Ḥārith رضي الله عنها, or her Islam is verified at the time of migration, emigrates and joins the Holy Prophet ﷺ, she will not be returned to her non-Muslim husband, because she is forbidden to him. [Qurṭubī cited this incident in his commentary on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما].

Hence, these verses clarify that the assumption that the general sense of the wordings of the treaty cover both genders, males as well as females, is incorrect. This condition is acceptable in the case of men, and not in the case of women. The best that can be done in their case is as follows: If a lady becomes Muslim and emigrates to the Muslim land, her *mahr* [dower] should be returned to her non-Muslim husband which he had spent on

her. On the basis of these verses, the Holy Prophet ﷺ clarified the meaning of the clause. Hence, he did not restore the aforementioned Sa'īdah رضي الله عنها to her non-Muslim husband.

According to some reports, Umm Kulthūm, the daughter of the notorious 'Utbah Ibn Abī Mu'aiṭ, emigrated from Makkah and came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The disbelievers invoked the treaty and demanded her return. Some reports also indicate that she was married to 'Amr Ibn al-'Āṣ [who had not become a Muslim until then]. Her two brothers along with her escaped from Makkah and reached the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Her husband 'Amr Ibn al-'Āṣ came to Madīnah to take her back. In compliance with the terms of the treaty, the two brothers, 'Umarah and Walid, were sent back, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not send Sayyidah Umm Kulthūm رضي الله عنها and said that the clause applied to men, not to women. At this, the verses were revealed and confirmed the Holy Prophet's ﷺ interpretation.

Besides, several other reports relate similar incidents of other women who reached the Holy Prophet ﷺ after embracing Islam. Obviously, there is no contradiction in these narratives. Possibly all these incidents have taken place.

Exemption of Women from the Terms of the Treaty is not a Breach of Treaty. It is a clarification by Mutual Agreement of Parties Concerned.

Qurṭubī's above narration indicates that the wordings of the relevant clause were, though general, did not, according to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, cover women. Therefore, he clarified this position in Ḥudaibiyah, and these verses were revealed to confirm it. According to other versions, it seems that the Holy Prophet ﷺ went along with the general import of the clause, which covered women as well as men. These verses abrogated the general meaning of it, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ made it clear to the Quraish of Makkah, then and there, that the women are exempted from the clause. Consequently, he did not send them back. This shows that this exception was neither a breach of the treaty, which was highly unlikely from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, nor was it the case of ending the treaty. It was, in fact, a case of clarifying the true import of the clause. It does not matter whether this was the Holy Prophet's ﷺ understanding from the outset or whether he restricted the generality of the clause to men, to the exclusion

of women, after the revelation of the verse. At any rate, even after the clarification, both parties confirmed the peace treaty and acted upon it for a period of time. As a result of the peace pact, roads were safe and secure. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ wrote letters to the kings and emperors of the world. Abū Sufyān's trading caravan freely went into the Syrian territory where Heraclius invited him to his royal court and investigated about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

In short, even after the clarification both parties took the treaty as a valid document and acted upon it for a period of time. Therefore, it is not true to construe the clarification of the clause as a breach or termination of the treaty. Allah knows best!

Let us now study the meaning of the verses:

Testing the Believing Emigrant Women

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِذَا جَآءَكُمُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتُ مُهَٰجِرَٰتٍ فَٱمْتَحِنُوهُنَّ ۖ ٱللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَٰنِهِنَّ (O you who believe, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, put them to a test, Allah knows best about their faith...60:10). The verse purports to say that women are exempted from the relevant clause of the treaty because of their being Muslims. Since it was possible that a woman had fled from Makkah, not because of her faith, but on account of displeasure with her husband or being in love with some person in Madīnah or for some other mundane motive. Such women are not exempted from the terms of the treaty, but it is incumbent to send her back. Therefore the Muslims were ordered by this verse that they should put such a woman to a test to discover whether she was sincere and honest in her faith. Allah further states : ٱللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَٰنِهِنَّ (Allah knows best about their faith... 60:10) It indicates that real faith belongs to human heart which none besides Allah knows. It is possible to estimate a man's faith by his verbal confession and circumstantial evidence. Muslims are legally obliged to do just this much.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has explained the method of their testing as follows: An oath used to be taken from an emigrant woman to assert that she had not come because of hatred for her husband, or for the love of any man in Madīnah, or for any mundane reason, but purely and solely for the sake of Allah and for the love and pleasure of His Messenger ﷺ. When she swore an oath to this effect, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would permit her to reside in Madīnah and would return to her disbelieving

husband the dower [*mahr*] etc. that he might have spent on the believing emigrant wife. [Qurṭubī]

Sayyidah Ṣiddiqah ﷺ reports, as recorded in Tirmidhī [and he grades it as '*ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*'], that the method of testing them was the pledge of allegiance as in the forthcoming verse: إِذَاجَآءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ (... when the believing women come to you, seeking *bai'ah* [a pledge of allegiance] with you ....60:12). In other words, the methodology of testing the faith of the emigrant women was the pledge the women swore on the blessed hands of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as set out in this verse. It is not inconceivable that they had first to take an oath as mentioned in the narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and then they had to accomplish it by giving an oath of loyalty as mentioned in the verse 12. And Allah knows best!

فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوْهُنَّ مُؤْمِنٰتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوْهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ (...So, if you find them faithful, do not send them back to the disbelievers. . .60:10). In other words, when you have tested the emigrant women according to the above method and ascertained to your satisfaction that they were sincere and honest in their faith, then it is not permissible to send them back to the unbelievers.

لَاهُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ وَلَاهُمْ يَحِلُّوْنَ لَهُنَّ (...Neither these [women] are lawful for them, nor are those [disbelievers)] lawful for these [women]. ..60:10). That is to say, neither the believing women are permitted to remain in marriage with the unbelieving men nor are the unbelieving men permitted to marry them again.

Ruling

The verse states that any woman who was married to an unbeliever, but later she embraced Islam while her husband did not, the marriage tie between a believing woman and her disbelieving husband was *ipso facto* dissolved. This is the reason why women were exempted from the relevant clause of the treaty, as she was no longer permitted to her disbelieving husband.

وَاٰتُوْهُمْ مَّآ اَنْفَقُوْا (...And give them [the disbelievers] that [dower] which they had paid [to these women]....60:10) In other words, the emigrant believing woman's unbelieving husband should be refunded the dower etc. that he spent on her at the time of marriage. The relevant clause of treaty merely exempted women from being returned to their disbelieving husbands, because the relationship is not permitted, but the wealth or

money the latter had spent on the former should be paid back. The verse does not address the emigrant women to refund what their former husbands have spent on them. It addresses the Muslim Community as a whole to return the wealth or money, because it was possible, rather most likely that the wealth that was given to her might have finished or might have been depleted and they might be left with nothing to return. Hence, the Muslim Community as a whole was entrusted with the responsibility of paying back on her behalf to fulfil the terms of the treaty. If this responsibility could be carried out by the State from its public treasury [*bai-ul-māl*], it would be so much the better, or it should have been paid by contributions of the Muslims. [Qurṭubī]

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ اَنْ تَنْكِحُوْهُنَّ اِذَآ اٰتَيْتُمُوْهُنَّ اُجُوْرَهُنَّ (...And there is no sin for you if you marry them, when you give them their dowers....60:10) The previous verse made it clear that the marriage tie between the emigrant believing woman and her disbelieving husband dissolves, and thus she is forbidden to him. The current verse clarifies that it is possible for a Muslim man to marry this emigrant lady, although her former husband is still alive and did not divorce her, but in terms of the sacred law of Sharī'ah, the marriage with him stands dissolved. Marriage, therefore, with another Muslim is permitted.

It is clear from the above verse that if an unbeliever's wife becomes Muslim, the marriage tie is automatically broken. The question now is when will it be possible for her to marry another Muslim man. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى, the basic principle is as follows: When the wife becomes a convert to the Islamic faith and her husband remains an infidel, the Muslim ruler should call upon the husband to embrace the faith also. If he accepts, the woman continues to be his wife; but if he refuses, the Muslim ruler must separate them. Thus separation is completed between them. She may then marry any Muslim man of her choice. But obviously, a Muslim ruler can approach the husband only in an Islamic country. It is not possible to approach him, if he is in a non-Muslim country, to make any such requisition and decide on separation in case of refusal. In such an instance, the way out is for the woman to migrate to the Islamic State or join the Muslim army base, in which case the separation will be accomplished. This situation, in the legal parlance of the jurists, is referred to as *ikhtilāf-ud-dārain* or difference of

states. It means that if there is a difference of states between an unbelieving husband and a believing wife, the former being in un-Islamic State and the latter in the Islamic state, the separation is accomplished, and the wife is free to marry someone else. [Hidāyah and others]

The verse, while permitting the Muslims to marry such women, has added: إِذَا اٰتَيْتُمُوْهُنَّ أُجُوْرَهُنَّ "when you give them their dowers". This in fact is not a condition of marriage, because the jurists unanimously agree that the validity of marriage is not conditional upon payment of dower [*mahr*], though its payment is compulsory on or after marriage. It has been mentioned here as a condition presumably because one *mahr* has already been returned to the unbelieving husband, and the Muslim who wished to marry her might think that there was no need for him to pay another *mahr,* since her *mahr* has already been paid. Hence, the verse clarifies that the previous *mahr* was in lieu of the previous marriage. When the next marriage would take place, another *mahr* would be compulsory.

وَلَا تُمْسِكُوْا بِعِصَمِ الْكَوَافِرِ (...And do not hold on to the ties of marriage with the disbelieving women....60:10) The word *'isam* is the plural of *'ismah,* which originally means 'protection//bond' and it refers to the marriage bond that is protected. The word *kawāfir* is the plural of *kāfirah* and it refers to a 'pagan woman'. It cannot refer to an unbelieving woman who is a *kitābiyyah* [a follower of a previously revealed scripture, like a Jew or a Christian], because it is permitted to marry her by the express text of the Qur'ān. The purport of the verse is to explain that the marriage between the Muslims and the pagans that was allowed so far is now repealed. It is forbidden for a Muslim now to marry a pagan woman. Such marriages that had been contracted previously have also been cancelled. It is not lawful for any Muslim man to carry on marriage ties with women who are polytheists. When this verse was revealed, the blessed Companions gave up their wives who were polytheists. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ had two pagan wives who were with him until the migration, but when the migration took place, they remained in Makkah. When this verse was revealed, Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ divorced them. [Transmitted by al-Baghawi from Zuhrī, as quoted by Maẓharī]. The word *ṭalāq* (divorce) used in this narration means to 'sever relationship'. *Ṭalāq* in its technical sense was not needed here, because by virtue of this verse the marriage tie or bond has already been broken.

وَاسْئَلُوا مَآ اَنْفَقْتُمْ وَلْيَسْئَلُوا مَآ اَنْفَقُوْا (..., and ask that which you had paid, and they should ask to pay that which they had paid ....60:10). It was stated previously that when a woman converts to Islam and emigrates to Madīnah, she is not sent back to Makkah, but becomes part of the Muslim Community, and the marriage tie between an emigrant believing woman and her disbelieving husband becomes dissolved in this way. However, it is necessary to give back the *mahr* (dower) of the disbelieving husband that he paid to her. Similarly, if [God forbid!] a Muslim woman becomes an apostate and absconds to Makkah, or if she was an infidel from beforehand and flees from her Muslim husband, the pagans of Makkah will not send her back, but they would be legally responsible to return the *mahr* that the Muslim husband had paid to her. Therefore, the amounts thus obligated should be determined by mutual understanding of the accounts. The Muslims acted upon this law willingly, because they sincerely believed that adherence to the command of the Qur'ān is binding. Thus they paid back the *mahr* to all unbelieving husbands who had paid it to their women. The pagans of Makkah, however, did not believe in the Qur'ān. Therefore, they did not act upon it, on which occasion the following verse was revealed. [Mentioned by al-Baghawī on the authority of Zuhrī, as quoted by Maẓharī]

وَاِنْ فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ اِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَاقَبْتُمْ فَاٰتُوا الَّذِيْنَ ذَهَبَتْ اَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِّثْلَ مَآ اَنْفَقُوْا ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْتُمْ بِهٖ مُؤْمِنُوْنَ

> And if some of your [non-Muslim] wives have slipped from you, [and their present non-Muslim husbands do not pay to you the dower as aforesaid,] and you have your turn [of paying dower to the previous non-Muslim husbands of your present wives], then [instead of paying dower to them,] give those whose wives have slipped the like amount of what they had paid [to them]. And fear Allah, the One in whom you believe. (60:11)

The verb *'āqabtum* is derived from *mu 'āqabah*. It means 'to retaliate'. This meaning is possible here [as reported by Qatādah, Mujāhid and Qurṭubī]. In this case, it implies that if some of the wives of the Muslims desert to disbelievers, it was legally binding on them in terms of the treaty to pay back the dowers given to them by the Muslim husbands, just as the Muslims gave them back the dowers given by the pagan husbands to the emigrant Muslim women. But since the pagans failed to reciprocate, and

did not pay the dower money, the believing husbands are entitled to retaliate by withholding an amount equal to what was due on the disbelieving husbands who married the deserting wives of the Muslims, and did not pay it. How this withheld amount will be spent is mentioned in the following sentence: فَاٰتُوا الَّذِيْنَ ذَهَبَتْ اَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِّثْلَ مَا اَنْفَقُوْا (... then [instead of paying dower to them,] give those whose wives have slipped the like amount of what they had paid.) This means that the amounts withheld as aforesaid shall be given to the Muslims whose wives had gone to the pagans, and they did not pay back their dowers to their Muslim husbands.

Another sense of the verb *'āqabtum, 'āqqabtum* and *a'qabtum* in its variant form is 'to acquire spoils of war'. The verb *'āqabtum* is read in these variant forms (*qirā'āt*) by various master readers of the Qur'ān. Authorities like Qatādah and Mujāhid ﷺ have said that all these three forms of the verb mean to 'acquire spoils of war'. In this case the verse means: if the Muslim husbands' wives fled to the unbelievers and, in terms of the treaty, they did not return the dowers to the Muslim husbands, they would be compensated from the booty acquired in war.(1)

Did some of the Muslim Women become Apostates and flee to Makkah?

Some of the authorities believe that the situation mentioned in this verse arose only in one incident. The wife of Sayyidnā 'Iyāḍ Ibn Ghanam Quraishī, Umm-ul-Hakam bint Abī Sufyān, abandoned the Islamic Faith and fled to Makkah. However, later on she reverted to Islam.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ reports that about six women altogether abandoned Islam and deserted to the unbelievers, one of whom is the woman whose name has been given in the previous paragraph. The other

(1) A third interpretation of the word is that it is derived from *'aqibah'* which means 'turn', and the infinitive *mu'aqabah* means 'to take turn in riding a horse etc.' In this case the verb *'āqabtum* in the verse would mean: 'you have your turn', and the sense would be that when it is your turn to pay the dowers to the unbelievers, you should, instead of paying it to them, pay it to those Muslims whose wives have deserted them and joined the unbelievers who did not return to their husbands the dower they had paid to deserting wives and were entitled, by virtue of the treaty, to take it back from the unbelievers. This interpretation is adopted by 'Ālūsī in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, and by Maulana Ashraf 'Alī Thanawi رحمه الله تعالى. The translation in the text is based on it. **(Muḥammad Taqi Usmānī)**

five of them were infidels from outset and remained in Makkah at the time of migration. When this verse was revealed dissolving the marriage between Muslims and pagans, they stubbornly clung to their disbelief and were not willing to embrace the Faith. As a result, these women were also counted among those whose dowers should be paid to their Muslim husbands by the pagans of Makkah. But they did not pay, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ compensated for the loss of their dowers from the spoils of war.

This indicates that there is only one incident where a woman actually became an apostate and fled to Makkah from Madīnah. The rest of the five women were unbelievers from beginning. As reported earlier, even the woman who abandoned Islam and fled to Makkah later on reverted to Islam. [Qurṭubī]. Baghawī cites, on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما, that all five women who are counted as apostates reverted to Islam later on. [Maẓharī].

Bai'ah of Women

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِذَا جَآءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلٰٓى اَنْ لَّا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللّٰهِ شَيْئًا (O Prophet, when the believing women come to you, seeking *bai'ah* [a pledge of allegiance] with you that they will not ascribe any thing as a partner to Allah, ...60:12). This verse requires the Holy Prophet ﷺ to take a pledge from the Muslim women not only to adhere to Islamic articles of faith, but also to all the Islamic precepts. Previously, in verse [10] Allah had directed that when the emigrant women come to the believers, they should be tested and examined. The pledge of allegiance in the present verse is a complement to this test of the faith. But the words of the verse are general, and not confined to new Muslim emigrants. In fact, it covers all Muslim women. Accordingly, when the pledge was actually taken, it was not restricted to the emigrant new Muslim women, but the earlier Muslim women joined it as well, as is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, on the authority of Sayyidah Umm 'Aṭiyyah رضي الله عنها. It is also recorded by Baghawi from Sayyidah Umaimah bint Ruqaiqah رضي الله عنها who adds that in the company of a few other women she gave *bai'ah* (pledge) to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Holy Prophet ﷺ added the following over-rider فِيْمَا اسْتَطَعْتُنَّ وَاَطَقْتُنَّ (In as much as you have the ability and strength to carry them out.) Sayyidah Umaimah رضي الله عنها says: "This shows that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had more mercy and

compassion for us than ourselves, as we wanted to pledge without any restriction or condition, but by utterance of this sentence he reduced the burden and tension of the terms of the loyalty, so that we may not be held guilty for any violation under compelled circumstances." [Maẓharī].

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﵂ says, as recorded in Bukhārī, that the loyalty of women was their verbal pledge of allegiance, not by touching the hand of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, as was the custom in the case of men's loyalty. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ blessed hand never touched the hand of any non-*maḥram*. [Maẓharī]

Reports indicate that the *bai'ah* (pledge of allegiance) of women took place not only on this occasion after Ḥudaibiyah, but several times later as well. Such a pledge was taken on the day of the Conquest of Makkah. At first, the Holy Prophet ﷺ took pledge of loyalty from men, then he took it from women at mount Ṣafā. Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﵁ used to relay the words of loyalty, on behalf of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, to the women gathering at the foot of the mountain, who participated in this pledge. Abū Sufyān's wife, Hind, also participated in this pledge. At first, she felt embarrassed and wanted to hide herself. But the pledge contained some injunctions of Sharī'ah, and she was forced to speak and asked several questions. Maẓharī sets out a detailed account of this incident.

Men's *bai'ah* was Concise and Women's *bai'ah* Elaborate

Generally, the *bai'ah* taken from men was about Faith and Islam. Their pledge did not contain the details of injunctions of Sharī'ah, unlike the pledge of women, which contained the details that are forthcoming. The difference between the two pledge is that men's pledging for faith and obedience secures an undertaking to practice the entire system of Sharī'ah and religion, and therefore there was no need for details. Women, on the other hand, are generally less intelligent than men. Therefore, details were thought to be necessary. This is the *bai'ah* that started with women, but later on was not confined to them. As time went on, the same detailed *bai'ah* was taken from men as well. Prophetic Traditions confirm this [as transmitted by Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit ﵁] [Qurṭubī]. Furthermore, the injunctions mentioned in the *bai'ah* of women in this verse are those regarding which they are normally lax.

That is another reason why the following details had to be set out. There are six injunctions mentioned in the verse; يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلٰى اَنْ لَّايُشْرِكْنَ بِاللّٰهِ شَيْئًا (... seeking *bai'ah* (pledge of allegiance) with you that they will not ascribe any thing as a partner to Allah,....60:12) The first is that they will not ascribe any partner to Allah. Affirmation of faith and avoidance of *shirk* are vows common to men as well as women. The second pledge is that they shall not commit theft. Many women are wont to stealing from their husband's possessions. Therefore, this vow has been taken. The third vow is that they shall avoid committing adultery. If the women are firm in this, it shall make men's salvation from this sin easier. The fourth vow is that they shall not kill their children. In the Days of Ignorance, it was a common practice to bury infant girls alive and destroy their lives. This clause of the vow is a bar to it. The fifth vow is that they shall not bring calumny against anyone. While referring to this injunction, following words are added: بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِنَّ وَاَرْجُلِهِنَّ (...that they falsely attribute between their hands and their feet") This phrase has been added in order to indicate that on the Day of Resurrection man's hands and feet will bear witness against his actions. The verse thus warns that he is committing such sins in the presence of four witnesses who will bear witness against him.

The word *buhtān* [calumny] is used in its general sense and it is totally forbidden, whether against the husband or any other person or even against a non-believer. *Buhtān* is even more severe sin if it is against the husband. Commentators have interpreted that the clause of *buhtān* may take place in the following ways: [1] a woman may claim that a child born to her from another man is her husband's; [2] a woman may take custody of another child and claim that it is her husband's; and [3] God forbid! a woman may commit adultery and conceive, and when the child is born, she may impute it to her husband. In short, it is prohibited to give a false ascription of paternity in anyway whatsoever.

The sixth vow is a general rule: وَلَا يَعْصِيْنَكَ فِيْ مَعْرُوْفٍ (...and will not disobey you in what is recognized [in Sharī'ah]....60:12) This vow means that they shall obey Allah's Messenger ﷺ and will not disobey him. But the obedience is qualified by the words, "in what is recognized in Sharī'ah" that is, the right and good things, although we know for sure

that Allah's Messenger ﷺ will only command people to do right and good. This is because the Muslims in general are made to understand clearly that obedience to any creation in disobedience to Allah is absolutely forbidden, so much so that even obedience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been qualified by this condition.

Another reason for adding this phrase may be that since this pledge of obedience was taken from women, the Satan could whisper evil thoughts into their minds and create deviant ways for them to go awry. The restriction blocked the way. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mumtaḥinah
Ends here

Sūrah As-Saff

(The Row)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 14 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

سَبَّحَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِی الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَالْعَزِیْزُ الْحَكِیْمُ
﴿١﴾ یٰۤاَیُّهَا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لِمَ تَقُوْلُوْنَ مَالَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ
اللّٰهِ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا مَالَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ یُحِبُّ الَّذِیْنَ یُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِیْ
سَبِیْلِهٖ صَفًّا كَاَنَّهُمْ بُنْیَانٌ مَّرْصُوْصٌ ﴿٤﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰی لِقَوْمِهٖ
یٰقَوْمِ لِمَ تُؤْذُوْنَنِیْ وَقَدْ تَّعْلَمُوْنَ اَنِّیْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَیْكُمْ ؕ فَلَمَّازَاغُوْا
اَزَاغَ اللّٰهُ قُلُوْبَهُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ لَایَهْدِی الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِیْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ
عِیْسَی ابْنُ مَرْیَمَ یٰبَنِیْۤ اِسْرَآءِیْلَ اِنِّیْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَیْكُمْ مُّصَدِّقًا لِّمَا
بَیْنَ یَدَیَّ مِنَ التَّوْرٰىةِ وَمُبَشِّرًاۢ بِرَسُوْلٍ یَّاْتِیْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِی اسْمُهٗۤ
اَحْمَدُ ؕ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ بِالْبَیِّنٰتِ قَالُوْا هٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِیْنٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ
مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰی عَلَی اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ یُدْعٰۤی اِلَی الْاِسْلَامِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ لَا
یَهْدِی الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِیْنَ ﴿٧﴾ ۚ یُرِیْدُوْنَ لِیُطْفِـُٔوْا نُوْرَاللّٰهِ بِاَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللّٰهُ
مُتِمُّ نُوْرِهٖ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ هُوَالَّذِیْۤ اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰی
وَدِیْنِ الْحَقِّ لِیُظْهِرَهٗ عَلَی الدِّیْنِ كُلِّهٖ ۙ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾

Allah's purity has been proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [1] **O those who believe, why do you say what you do not do?** [2] **It is severely hateful in Allah's sight that you say what you do not do.** [3] **Surely Allah loves those who fight in His way in firm rows, as if they were a solid edifice.** [4] **And (remember) when Mūsā said to his people, "O my people, why do you hurt me, while you know that I am a messenger of Allah towards you." So, when they adopted crookedness, Allah let their hearts become crooked. And Allah does not guide the sinful people.** [5] **And (remember) when 'Īsā, son of Maryam, said, "O children of Isrā'īl, I am a messenger of Allah towards you, confirming the Taurah that is (sent down) before me, and giving you the good news of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is Aḥmad." But when he came to them with manifest signs, they said, "This is a clear magic."** [6] **And who is more unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allah, while he is invited to Islam? And Allah does not guide the unjust people.** [7] **They wish to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah is to perfect His light, even though the disbelievers dislike (it).** [8] **He is the One who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, so that He makes it prevail over all religions, even though the *mushriks* (those who ascribe partners to Allah) dislike (it).** [9]

Commentary

Background of the revelation

Tirmidhī has recorded, on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ﷺ, that a group of Companions discussed among themselves that if we come to know which is the dearest of actions in the sight of Allah, we shall act upon it. Ḥākim reported this Tradition and graded its chain as '*ṣaḥīḥ*'. Baghawī in his citation added the following words: "If we come to know which is the dearest of actions in the sight of Allah, we shall dedicate our lives and wealth to it." [Maẓharī].

Ibn Kathīr, with reference to Musnad of Aḥmad, reports that some of the Companions gathered and wanted someone to go to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and ask him about the action that is dearest to Allah, but no one dared to do so. Whilst this discussion was going on, the Holy Messenger ﷺ sent a man to call each one of them by name. When they all arrived, the Holy

Prophet ﷺ recited the entire Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaff which had been revealed just then. This Sūrah shows that the 'dearest action' they were looking for was '*jihād* in the cause of Allah' and their statement that 'if we come to know about it, we shall dedicate our lives in acting upon it' was a sort of claim of having ability to do it. At this, they are admonished that it is not proper for any believer to make such a claim, because no one can for sure know whether he will be able to implement his intentions when the time arrives. It is not in his power that all the causes of action are made effective and all impediments are removed. Nor are the abilities and strengths of his hands or arms or limbs or organs altogether in his power. Nor is his determination or intention completely in his control. Therefore, even the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been instructed in the Qur'ān, thus:

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَاىْءٍ اِنِّىْ فَاعِلٌ ذٰلِكَ غَدًا اِلَّا اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ

"And never say about anything, 'I am going to do this tomorrow, unless [you say - 'if] Allah wills.) [18: 23-24]

Although the intention of the blessed Companions was not to make a boastful claim, it did seem apparently as a claim, which Allah dislikes. If a person makes a commitment to do something in the future, he needs to surrender it to the Divine will and affirm it by saying 'If Allah wills'. The following verses are revealed to admonish the believers.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لِمَ تَقُوْلُوْنَ مَالَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا مَالَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾

(O those who believe, why do you say what you do not do? It is severely hateful in Allah's sight that you say what you do not do...61:2-3)

Apparently, the phrase 'what you do not do' implies that one should not claim to do something he does not intend to do. From this it may be deduced that it is prohibited to make a commitment to do a work while a person does not have the genuine intention to really do it, because this would be ostentation and a false commitment. Obviously, the blessed Companions, in the story of the background of revelation, were not making such promises without having intention to fulfill them. Instead, their intention was genuine. From this we learn that the verse includes a situation where a person commits to do something with true intention to do it, but relies solely on his own strength, it is not in keeping with his

station of *'abdiyyah* or 'servitude'. First of all, there is no need to make such a claim. If the occasion does arise to do something, he may go ahead and do it. If, for some reason or the other, a person has to make a promise or claim, he may affirm it by saying 'If Allah wills'. In this way, it would not be a boastful claim.

Ruling

It follows from the above discussion that if a person claims that he will do something in future but has no intention to do it, it is a major sin (*kabīrah*) and a cause of incurring Allah's wrath. The sentence: كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ "It is severely hateful in Allah's sight that you say what you do not do....[61:3]" applies to this situation. However, in a situation where one makes a claim to do something in future with real intention to do it, it is *makrūh* [reprehensible] and forbidden only if he makes the claim relying on his own strength and ability.

Difference between a Claim (*Da'wā*) and Preaching (*Da'wah*)

It is learnt from the foregoing discussion that these verses are related to false claims (*Da'wā*) to do something in future without intention to do it, which incurs Divine displeasure and indignation. This verse is not related to a situation where a preacher invites others to do something, while he himself does not do it. The rules of this situation are mentioned in other verses and Aḥadīth. For example: اَتَاْمُرُوْنَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ اَنْفُسَكُمْ (Do you bid others to righteousness while you ignore your own selves) [2:44] This verse puts to shame such preachers who do not practice what they preach. The import of this verse is that when they are preaching to others, they should preach to themselves with greater force, and if they are calling other people to do good deeds, they too should practice them.

All this does not imply that if a person has been lax in the performance of good deeds, he should abandon preaching to others. Or if he has been indulging in any kind of sin, he should not forbid others from indulging in such sins. It needs to be borne in mind that the performance of a righteous deed is one form of virtue, and urging others to perform this righteous deed is another form of virtue in its own right. Obviously, if one has abandoned one form of virtue, it does not necessarily follow that he should abandon the other form as well. It is possible that through the blessing of the preachment, the preacher might develop the ability to perform the righteous deed. This has been experienced widely and on a

large scale. However, if the deed belongs to the category of *wājib* or *sunnah mu'akkadah,* it is obligatory, in the light of the verses, to continuously show remorse and regret on one's not practicing it. And if the action belongs to the category of *mustaḥabbāt*, it is *mustaḥab* [rewardable] to show remorse and regret.

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِيْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِىْ سَبِيْلِهٖ صَفًّا كَاَنَّهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَّرْصُوْصٌ (Surely Allah loves those who fight in His way in firm rows, as if they were a solid edifice...61:4) The main subject of this Sūrah for which it was revealed is to mention the dearest action in the sight of Allah. This verse states that it is *jihād* in Allah's way, and that the best row of battle in the sight of Allah is the one firmly established against Allah's enemies to make Allah's word prevail, and which, on account of the valor and unshaken determination of Mujāhidīn, looks like a strong structure cemented with molten lead.

This is followed by a description of the Jihāds which Prophets Mūsā and 'Īsā علیہما السلام fought in Allah's Cause, and how they suffered at the hands of the enemies. After this description, the Muslims are directed to undertake *jihād*. The stories of Prophets Mūsā and 'Īsā علیہما السلام have many academic and practical lessons and guidance to offer. For instance, it is described in the story of 'Īsā عليه السلام that when he invited the Children of Israel to accept his prophet-hood and obey him, he mentioned two things in particular. First, he said that he was not a unique Prophet who came with unique teachings. In fact, his teachings were the same as those of the previous prophets. They are mentioned in the earlier celestial scriptures, and the same teachings will be imparted later by the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ. From among the earlier Scriptures, Torah is specially mentioned in this context, probably because that was the latest Scripture that was revealed to the Children of Israel. Otherwise belief in the Prophets embraces all the previous Scriptures of Allah. This also points out that the Sharī'ah of 'Īsā عليه السلام was, though an independent Sharī'ah, its most rules conformed to the sacred laws of Mūsā عليه السلام and the Torah. Only a few laws had been changed. This theme covered the subject of belief in the previous Prophets and their Books.

The second thing 'Īsā عليه السلام mentioned in particular was the good news of the advent of the Final Messenger ﷺ. This too points out that his teachings will also be the same as those of the previous Prophets, and therefore it is the demand of reason and honesty to believe in him.

Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ foretold the Children of Israel that a Final Messenger ﷺ will come after him by the name of Aḥmad. When he appears, it would be obligatory for them to embrace faith in him and obey him مُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُوْلٍ يَّاْتِىْ مِنْ بَعْدِى اسْمُه اَحْمَدُ (...and giving you the good news of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is Aḥmad."...6) The name of the Final Messenger is given here as Aḥmad. The name of the Final Messenger ﷺ was Muḥammad and Aḥmad. He had some other names as well. However, the name given in Injīl is Aḥmad rather than Muḥammad, perhaps because Muḥammad was a common name in Arabia since time immemorial. There was a possibility that the people might take the reference to some other person, rather than the Final Messenger of Allah. The name Aḥmad, on the other hand, was an uncommon name in Arabia, and was exclusive to the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Prophecy of The Final Messenger of Allah in Injīl

It is a known fact that the previously revealed Divine scriptures have been changed and distorted. The Jews and the Christians themselves had to admit that Torah and Injīl have been subjected to changes and distortion. As a matter of fact, the distortions made in these scriptures are so drastic that it is hardly possible to make out the original texts of the scriptures. Based on the distorted version of Injīl, the Christians today challenge the correctness of the Qur'ānic version of the prophecy, asserting that no prophecy in the name of Aḥmad is found in the Injīl. An elaborate response to Christian challenge has been prepared by Maulana Raḥmatullah Kairānwī رحمه الله تعالىٰ. The name of his book is *Izhār-ul -Ḥaqq*. He has thoroughly analyzed Christianity and changes made in the Bible. He concludes that despite drastic changes in the present Biblical version the prophecy about the Prophet Aḥmad ﷺ is still available.

This book was originally written in Arabic, later its translations appeared in Turkish and English. Christian missionaries attempted their utmost to destroy it. Its Urdu translation was not available until recently. A little while back, Maulana Akbar 'Alī, a lecturer at Dārul Uloom Karachi, translated it into Urdu, with in-depth research into current versions of the Bible by Maulana Muḥammad Taqi, lecturer at Darul Uloom, and published in three volumes. Volume [3] from pages 182 to 362 elaborates on the prophecies pertaining to the Holy Prophet ﷺ with

reference to the currently published Bibles, and rebuts their doubts and allays their suspicions.

Verse 10 - 14

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا هَلۡ اَدُلُّكُمۡ عَلٰى تِجَارَةٍ تُنۡجِيۡكُمۡ مِّنۡ عَذَابٍ اَلِيۡمٍ
﴿۱۰﴾ تُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوۡلِهٖ وَتُجَاهِدُوۡنَ فِىۡ سَبِيۡلِ اللّٰهِ بِاَمۡوَالِكُمۡ
وَ اَنۡفُسِكُمۡ ؕ ذٰلِكُمۡ خَيۡرٌ لَّكُمۡ اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱﴾ يَغۡفِرۡ لَكُمۡ
ذُنُوۡبَكُمۡ وَيُدۡخِلۡكُمۡ جَنّٰتٍ تَجۡرِىۡ مِنۡ تَحۡتِهَا الۡاَنۡهٰرُ وَمَسٰكِنَ
طَيِّبَةً فِىۡ جَنّٰتِ عَدۡنٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ الۡفَوۡزُ الۡعَظِيۡمُ ﴿۱۲﴾ وَاُخۡرٰى تُحِبُّوۡنَهَا ؕ
نَصۡرٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَفَتۡحٌ قَرِيۡبٌ ؕ وَبَشِّرِ الۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ﴿۱۳﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا
كُوۡنُوۡۤا اَنۡصَارَ اللّٰهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيۡسَى ابۡنُ مَرۡيَمَ لِلۡحَوَارِيّٖنَ مَنۡ اَنۡصَارِىۡۤ
اِلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ قَالَ الۡحَوَارِيُّوۡنَ نَحۡنُ اَنۡصَارُ اللّٰهِ فَاٰمَنَتۡ طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنۡۢ بَنِىۡۤ
اِسۡرَآءِيۡلَ وَكَفَرَتۡ طَّآئِفَةٌ ۚ فَاَيَّدۡنَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا عَلٰى عَدُوِّهِمۡ
فَاَصۡبَحُوۡا ظٰهِرِيۡنَ ﴿۱۴﴾

O those who believe, shall I tell you about a trade that saves you from a painful punishment? [10] (It is that) you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and carry out *jihād* in His way with your riches and your lives. That is much better for you, if you but know. [11] (If you do this,) He will forgive for you your sins, and will admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow, and to pleasant dwellings in gardens of eternity. That is the great achievement. [12] And (He will give you) another thing that you love: Help from Allah, and a victory, near at hand. [13] O those who believe, be supporters of (the religion of) Allah, just as 'Īsā, son of Maryam, said to the Disciples, "Who are my supporters towards Allah?" The Disciples said, "We are the supporters of (the religion of) Allah." So a group from the children of Isrā'īl believed, and another group disbelieved. Then We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became victorious. [14]

Commentary

تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَتُجَاهِدُوْنَ فِیْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِاَمْوَالِكُمْ وَ اَنْفُسِكُمْ (...you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and carry out *jihād* in His way with your riches and your lives....61:11) This verse refers to 'faith and *jihād* (struggle) in Allah's way with one's wealth and life' as a trade, because when man invests wealth in trade and works hard, he gains profit. Likewise, when man believes in Allah and invests his life and wealth in His cause, he incurs Allah's pleasure and attains the eternal blessings of the Hereafter, which is mentioned in the forthcoming verse that whoever carries out this trade, Allah will forgive his sins and provide him with dwellings in the Gardens of Eternity with all sorts of luxuries and comforts, as is mentioned by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in explanation of 'pleasant dwellings'. Alongside the blessings of the Hereafter, the next verse promises some blessings of this world too:

وَاُخْرٰى تُحِبُّوْنَهَا ط نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيْبٌ (And [He will give you] another thing that you love: Help from Allah, and a victory, near at hand ...61:13) This verse adds that the blessings of this trade are not restricted to the Hereafter. There is one blessing that will be granted right here in this world, which is the Divine help and an imminent victory, that is, conquests of enemy territories. If the word *qarīb* (near) is taken as the opposite of Hereafter, it would include all later Islamic conquests of Arab and non-Arab territories. And if the word *qarīb* (near) is taken in its normal sense, it would, in the first instance, apply to the conquest of Khaibar, and in the second instance it would apply to the Conquest of Makkah. This 'near victory' is referred to as تُحِبُّوْنَهَا "that you love". It implies that this worldly blessing is dear to man, because he is by nature haste-prone as the Qur'ān says وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ عَجُوْلًا "...and man is prone to haste. [17:11] This, however, does not imply that the blessings of the Hereafter are not dear to him. It simply means that the love of seeking the blessings of the Hereafter is quite obvious, but he naturally would love to have the blessings of this world as well. They too will be granted to him.

كَمَا قَالَ عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِلْحَوَارِيّٖنَ مَنْ اَنْصَارِیْٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ (...just as 'Īsā, son of Maryam, said to the Disciples, "Who are my supporters towards Allah?" ...[61:14]" The word حَوَارِيّٖنَ *ḥawāriyyīn* is the plural of *ḥawāriyy* which connotes a 'sincere friend who is free from any kind of adulteration' [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī,

referring to Azharī]. This is the reason why people who believed in Prophet Jesus ﷺ are called *ḥawāriyy*. They were twelve in number, as is already discussed in Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān. This verse refers to an incident of Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ and urges the Muslims to gird up their loins to unselfishly help and support the religion of Allah, as when Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ was hurt by the enemies, he asked his disciples مَنْ اَنْصَارِىْٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ "Who are my supporters towards Allah?" ...[14] In other words, 'who will help and support me in propagating the religion of Allah?' Twelve people volunteered and pledged to his loyalty and helped him in preaching the religion. Following this example, the Muslims ought to help and support Allah's religion. The blessed Companions of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ followed this example to the fullest extent, and acted upon this command to the highest degree, so much so that the example of the Holy Prophets' Companions stands unparalleled in the history of other ummahs. They helped the Holy Prophet ﷺ and, in the process, incurred the wrath and enmity of Arab and non-Arab communities for the sake of Allah's religion. They bore their tortures and persecution. They dedicated their lives, wealth and children to the cause. Eventually, Allah granted them help and victory. He granted them triumph and mastery of the world, and the territories of the enemies fell into their hands.

Three Groups of Christians

فَاٰمَنَتْ طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْۢ بَنِىْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ وَكَفَرَتْ طَّآئِفَةٌ ۚ فَاَيَّدْنَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا عَلٰى عَدُوِّهِمْ فَاَصْبَحُوْا ظٰهِرِيْنَ

(So, a group from the children of Isra'il believed, and another group disbelieved. Then We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became victorious...61:14)

Baghawi interprets this verse in the light of a narration of Sayyidna 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that when Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ was raised to the heaven, his followers disagreed and became three groups. A group claimed that He was Himself God who went back to the heaven. The second group claimed that He Himself was not God, but God's son. God lifted him up and salvaged him from the enemies and granted him superiority. The third group proclaimed the truth and said that he was neither god nor the son of god, but he was Allah's servant and His Messenger. Allah took him away to the heaven to protect him from the enemies, and to raise his status. These people were the true believers.

Different sectors of the general public attached themselves to each one of these groups. The groups clashed with one another. The two of the non-believing groups overpowered the third group, which was a group of true believers. Eventually, Allah raised the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ who supported the group of the true believers. This group thus dominated the others because of their correct belief and its solid proofs confirmed by the Qur'ān. [Mazhari].

In this interpretation, the phrase الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا "those who believed [14]" would refer to the believers of the Ummah of the Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام who would triumph against the unbelievers with the help and support of the Final Messenger ﷺ. [Mazhari]. Some scholars hold that when Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام was raised to the heaven, his followers were divided into two groups. One of them believed that he was God or God's son and thus they became polytheists. The other group believed that he was the servant of Allah and His Messenger, and thus they stuck to the right religion. Then there was a war between the believers and the unbelievers. Allah granted victory to the believing faction of Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام against the unbelieving faction. But it is popularly understood that in the religion of Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام the institution of *jihād* did not exist. Therefore, it is inconceivable that believers would have waged a war. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]. However, it is possible that the unbelieving Christians might have started the war and the believing Christians were forced to defend themselves. This will not fall under the category of war.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaff
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah

(The Friday)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 11 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

يُسَبِّحُ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوْسِ الْعَزِيْزِ
الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِىْ بَعَثَ فِى الْاُمِّيّٖنَ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ
اٰيٰتِهٖ وَيُزَكِّيْهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ ق وَاِنْ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ
لَفِىْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَّاٰخَرِيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوْا بِهِمْ ط وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ
الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٣﴾ ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ط وَاللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ
الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٤﴾ مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرٰىةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوْهَا كَمَثَلِ
الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ اَسْفَارًا ط بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ط
وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْٓا اِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ
اَنَّكُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ لِلّٰهِ مِنْ دُوْنِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ
﴿٦﴾ وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهٗ اَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ ط وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ بِالظّٰلِمِيْنَ
﴿٧﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِىْ تَفِرُّوْنَ مِنْهُ فَاِنَّهٗ مُلٰقِيْكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّوْنَ اِلٰى
عٰلِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ ع

All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth

proclaim the purity of Allah, the Sovereign, the Supreme in Holiness, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [1] **He is the One who raised amidst the unlettered people a messenger from among themselves who recites to them His verses, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the wisdom, although they were in an open error before.** [2] **And (this Messenger is sent also) to others of them who did not join them so far, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.** [3] **That is Allah's bounty that He gives to whomsoever He wills, and Allah is the Lord of the great bounty.** [4] **The example of those who were ordered to bear (the responsibility of acting upon) the Torah, then they did not bear it, is like a donkey that carries a load of books. Evil is the example of those who have rejected the verses of Allah. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.** [5] **Say, "O those who are Jews, if you claim that you are the friends of Allah to the exclusion of all other people, then express your desire for death, if you are true.** [6] **And they will never express this desire, because of what their hands have sent ahead. And Allah is fully aware of the wrongdoers.** [7] **Say, "Indeed, the death from which you (try to) run away has to visit you, then you will be sent back to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He will tell you what you used to do.** [8]

Commentary

يُسَبِّحُ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ (All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth proclaim the purity of Allah,...62:1] Surahs of the Qur'ān that begin with '*sabbaḥa*' or '*yusabbihu*' [proclaiming Allah's purity] are called *Musabbiḥāt*, in all of which it is established that everything in the heaven and earth proclaims the purity of Allah.

That all creatures in the heavens and the earth declare the purity of Allah in a symbolic way is understandable. Everyone may understand that every single particle created by Allah bears testimony to the wisdom and power of the Wise Creator in their circumstantial language, which is their *tasbīḥ* (proclamation). However, the fact is that, every thing proclaims *tasbīḥ* in its real sense in its own way, because Allah has bestowed some sort of sense and perception to every particle of this universe, even to stones and trees, according to their ability. Since the first demand upon sense and perception is to recognize its Creator and Maker, and glorify Him, therefore, it is not far-fetched to conceive that

everything in nature really declares the purity of Allah in its own peculiar language, though human ears might not be able to hear it. Thus the Qur'ān on one occasion says: وَلٰكِنْ لَّا تَفْقَهُوْنَ تَسْبِيْحَهُمْ (...but you do not understand their extolling ...[17:44] At the commencement of most Surahs called *Musabbiḥāt* the past indefinite tense *sabbaḥa* is employed. Only at the beginning of Sūrahs Al-Jumu'ah and At-Taghābun the present form *yusabbiḥu* is used. The different forms at the beginning of different Surah have fresh rhetorical elegance and refinement. The past tense connotes certitude, and therefore mostly this tense has been used. The present form connotes continuity, which is employed in two places for this purpose.

هُوَالَّذِىْ بَعَثَ فِى الْاُمِّيّٖنَ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْهُمْ (He is the One who raised amidst the unlettered people a messenger from among themselves...62:2) The word *ummiyyin* is the plural of *ummiyy,* which denotes 'unlettered'. The Arabs were known by this title, because they did not know how to read and write. Very few of them had the knowledge of reading and writing. The Arabs in this verse are specially referred to in order to express the great power of Allah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is also sent amongst them, who is himself unlettered. The duties and reformative functions of a Prophet [as set out in the forthcoming verse] are based on knowledge and education. These reforms are such that no unlettered individual can ever teach them, nor is it possible for an unlettered nation to learn. It was only through the Divine Supreme Power and the miracle of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that when these reforms started, great scholars, intellectuals, men of letters, savants and sages were born among the unlettered people, and their knowledge, wisdom, sagacity and erudition was recognized by the entire world.

The Three Objectives of the Advent of the Prophet ﷺ

يَتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ وَيُزَكِّيْهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ (...to recite His verses to them, and to make them pure, and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom....62:2) In the context of the Divine blessings bestowed to the mankind, three qualities of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been mentioned. One, to recite the verses of the Qur'ān to his Ummah. Two, to purify them of all the outer and inner defilements. This includes outer purification that relates to one's body and dress, and also the inner purification that relates to one's faith, actions and moral attitude. Three, to teach the Book

and the wisdom. These three factors are Divine blessings to the mankind on the one hand, and these are the basic objectives and the terms of reference of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for which he was sent to this world.

يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ايٰتِه (...to recite His verses to them) The word *tilāwah* lexically signifies 'to follow, to obey' but in the terminology of the Qur'ān, it signifies 'recitation or reading of the Divine Words'. The word *'āyāt* refers to the verses of the Qur'ān. The prepositional phrase *'alaihim* [to them] signifies that one of the objectives or duties of the Prophet ﷺ is to recite the verses of the Qur'ān to the people.

In the current verse, the second objective of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is to: يُزَكِّيهِمْ (make them pure) which is derived from *tazkiyah* and it means 'to make pure'. Often it is used exclusively for inner cleanliness, that is, to be free from such inner adulterating matter as *kufr, shirk* and free from inner moral defilement. But occasionally, it is used in the general sense of both outer and inner cleanliness. Probably, in this context it is used in the general sense of the term.

يُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ (...to teach them the Book and the Wisdom...62:2) The word *al-Kitāb* refers to the Holy Qur'ān, and the word *al-ḥikmah* refers to all the teachings and guidance that have been received from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ orally or practically. As a result, many of the commentators have interpreted the word *ḥikmah* as the Approved Way [Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ].

A Question and its Answer

A question arises here that the natural order of wording in the verse should have been thus: [1] recitation or teaching of words; followed by [2] teaching of meaning; and consequently [3] making pure by inculcating righteous deeds and high morals. However, in most places the Qur'ān has changed the sequence by inserting '[3] *tazkiyah* or making pure' between '[1] *tilāwah* (recitation) and '[2] *ta'līm* (teaching). Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī explains that if the natural order of wording were to be maintained in all verses, all three elements would have combined together and become 'one', as it happens in pharmaceutical mixing of many substances, the aggregate of which loses the separate identity of each element, and becomes a single 'compound' whereas probably Allah wanted to maintain separate identities of the Divine blessings and the three Prophetic duties separately

identifiable. By changing the natural order in most places, the Holy Qur'ān has probably alluded to this fact.

Please see Ma'arif-ul-Qur'ān Vol. 1/pp 331-343, under the Surah Al-Baqarah Verse 129, for fuller explanation of this verse.

وَّاٰخَرِيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوْا بِهِمْ ۚ وَهُوَالْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ (...And [this Messenger is sent also] to others of them who did not join them so far. And He is the All-mighty, the All-wise...62:3) The word *'ākharīn* means 'other people' and the phrase لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوْا بِهِمْ means 'those people who have not yet joined the unlettered people'. This refers to all those Muslims who will enter the fold of Islam until the Last Hour [as transmitted by Ibn Zaid, Mujāhid and others]. This indicates that the succeeding generations of Muslims will be appended to the earlier generations of believers, that is, the noble Companions. This is great good news for the succeeding generations of Muslims. [Rūḥ].

Grammatically, there are two views regarding the conjoining of the word *'ākharīn*. One view holds that it is conjoined to *ummiyyīn* and it means that 'Allah has sent his Messenger among the unlettered people and also among those who have not yet joined them'. Sending the Prophet among the present unlettered people is quite obvious, but 'sending him among those who have not yet come' needs explanation. Bayan-ul-Qur'ān explains that 'sending among them' stands for 'sending for them' because the preposition *fī* in Arabic is also used in the sense of 'for'. According to some other grammarians, however, the word *'ākharīn* is conjoined to the objective pronoun him attached to the verb *yu'allimu-hum,* in which case the interpretation would be 'the Prophet teaches the unlettered people and also the people who have not joined them so far'. [Maẓharī prefers the latter interpretation].

Sayyidna Abū Hurairah ﷺ narrates, as recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim, that they were sitting in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ when Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah was revealed. He recited it to them, and when he reached the verse وَّاٰخَرِيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوْا بِهِمْ (...and others of them who have not joined them so far...62:3) they asked him who are these 'others'. He remained silent. They asked him the second time and he remained silent. They asked him the third time, and he put his blessed hand on the back

of Sayyidna Salmān Al-Fārisī ﷺ [who was at that time in the gathering] and said: "If faith were on Pleiades, even then some men or a man from these people would attain it." [Maẓharī]. This narration does not specify people of Persia, but it does prove that they are included in the general sense of 'others'. This narration speaks greatly of all non-Arabs who embrace Islam. [Maẓharī].

مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرٰىةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوْهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ اَسْفَارًا (The example of those who were ordered to bear (the responsibility of acting upon) the Torah, then they did not bear it, is like a donkey that carries a load of books...5) The word *asfār* is the plural of *sifr,* which means a 'large book'. The preceding verses described that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was raised up among the unlettered people having three main objectives of his mission. The previous Divine Book Torah described the Holy Prophet ﷺ almost with the same qualities as are described in the Qur'ān, which required that as soon as the Jews saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they should have recognized him and believed in him. But the material position and possessions blinded them to the teachings of Torah. Despite their knowledge of Torah, they acted as practical ignoramus. The verse describes their block-headed behaviour with the example of a donkey loaded with weighty tomes. The donkey carries its loads, but it is neither aware of its subject-matter, nor does it benefit by it. Similarly, the Jews carry around the Torah for material gains and to seek position and status among people, but they do not benefit by its guidance.

The Example of a Non-Practicing Scholar

Commentators have stated that the example given by the verse for Jews applies to any religious scholar who does not act upon his knowledge. A Persian poet has put it thus:

نہ محقق بود نہ دانش مند......چار پائے برو کتا بے چند

'He is neither a scholar, nor a knowledgeable person.

He is but an animal of four legs, carrying the load of some books'

قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْٓا اِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ اَنَّكُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ لِلّٰهِ مِنْ دُوْنِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ

(Say, "O those who are Jews, if you claim that you are the

friends of Allah to the exclusion of all other people, then express your desire for death, if you are true...62:6)

Despite their *kufr*, *shirk* and moral aberration, the Jews claimed نَحْنُ اَبْنٰٓؤُا اللّٰهِ وَاَحِبَّآؤُهٗ (...We are the sons of Allah and His favourites) [5:18] and they also claimed لَنْ يَّدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ اِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُوْدًا (...no one shall ever enter Paradise unless he is a Jew) [2:111] In other words, they believed themselves to be safe and immune from the punishment of the Hereafter, and thought that the blessings of Paradise are their personal property. Obviously, if a person believes that the blessings of the Hereafter are a zillion times better than the blessings of this world, he must, of necessity, wish for death, so that he is able to enter Paradise sooner and start enjoying its blessings forthwith. He sees with his own eyes that this world is not free from miseries, sorrows and hardships and one has to suffer from certain diseases as long as he is living here. Then if he believes that, as soon as he dies, he will certainly receive those numerous and eternal blessings, a wise man should naturally wish for death in his heart, so that he may be set free from this miserable world and reach the next world where he will reside for ever in eternal peace and comfort. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is instructed in the present verse to challenge the Jews that if they are Allah's children and His beloved ones and they do not have any fear of punishment in the Hereafter, then the reason demands that they should wish for death. Then the Holy Qur'ān itself falsified them in the following words:

وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهٗٓ اَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ (And they will never express this desire, because of what their hands have sent ahead...62:7) In other words, they will not wish for death because of the *kufr* and *shirk* and the evil deeds they have committed . They fully know that there will be nothing for them in the Hereafter but the punishment of Hell. Their claim that they are Allah's children and His loved ones is absolutely false, a claim that they themselves know is false. They make such claims for worldly and material gains. They also know that if they accept the Holy Prophet's ﷺ challenge and invoke death upon themselves, it would be readily accepted and they would die instantly. Being convinced of the falsity of their position, the Jews will refuse to accept the challenge. A Prophetic

Tradition reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has stated that if any one of them at that time had wished for death, he would have died instantly. [Rūḥ]

Is Longing for Death Permissible?

This subject has been fully discussed in Sūrah Al-Baqarah. Traditions forbid anyone to wish for death. The most important reason behind this is that no one has the right to believe that as soon as he dies, he will certainly enter Paradise and will have no fear of any punishment. Wishing for death in such a state of mind is tantamount to show bravery before Allah.

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِى تَفِرُّوْنَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلٰقِيْكُمْ (Say, "Indeed, the death from which you [try to] run away has to visit you,...62:8) In other words, the Jews' running away from longing for death despite their aforesaid claim is tantamount to running away from death itself. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is instructed in the verse to tell them that the death from which they are fleeing would inevitably catch up with them. If that would not happen instantly, it would certainly happen sometime later. Thus it is impossible for anyone to avoid or avert death in any way.

Laws pertaining to Avoiding the Causes of Death

There are many normal causes of death, from which both reason and Sharī'ah require man to avoid. Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ passed under a bent wall [as if it was about to fall down or collapse] and he passed it quickly, lest it should fall down or collapse on him. Likewise, if fire breaks out at some place, both reason and Sharī'ah dictate that one should run away from there. These circumstances of fleeing from death do not fall under fleeing from death denounced in the above verse, if our faith is sound and we believe that when the predetermined time of our death will approach, we will not be able to escape. Since we do not know for sure whether fire, or poison, or some other obnoxious thing will be the destined cause of our death in a particular situation, running away from them would not amount to fleeing from death that is denounced in the verse.

As far as bubonic plague or epidemic is concerned, it is a separate issue. The details appear in books of jurisprudence and Ḥadīth which may be consulted. The author of Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī has on this occasion discussed

this issue exhaustively and clarified it to a great degree. Some of its details have already been given in this book under the verses 2:243 to 244. See vol. 1, pp. 619-622.

Verses 9 - 11

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا نُوْدِيَ لِلصَّلٰوةِ مِنْ يَّوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا اِلٰى
ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ؕ ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۹﴾ فَاِذَا
قُضِيَتِ الصَّلٰوةُ فَانْتَشِرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ
وَاذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿۱۰﴾ وَاِذَا رَاَوْا تِجَارَةً اَوْ لَهْوَا
انْفَضُّوْٓا اِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوْكَ قَآئِمًا ؕ قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهْوِ وَمِنَ
التِّجَارَةِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿۱۱﴾

O you who believe, when the call for *ṣalāh* (prayer) is proclaimed on Friday, hasten for the remembrance of Allah, and leave off business. That is much better for you, if you but know. [9] **Then once the *ṣalāh* is finished, disperse in the land, and seek the grace of Allah. And remember Allah much, so that you may be successful.** [10] **And when they see some merchandise or amusement, they break away to it, and leave you standing. Say, "What is with Allah is much better than the amusement and the merchandise, and Allah is the best giver of sustenance."** [11]

Commentary

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا نُوْدِيَ لِلصَّلٰوةِ مِنْ يَّوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا اِلٰى ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ

O you who believe, when the call for *ṣalāh* (prayer) is proclaimed on Friday, hasten for the remembrance of Allah, and leave off business....[62:9]

The Arabic word for Friday is 'Yaum-ul-Jumu'ah' and is so called because it is the day of congregation for Muslims. Allah created the heavens, the earth and the entire universe in six days, and Friday was the last day when the creation was completed. Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام was created on that day; he was admitted into Paradise on that day; he was

sent down to the earth on that day; the Last Hour or the Day of Resurrection will occur on that day; and on the same day there is a moment when supplications are readily accepted. All this is established on the authority of authentic Traditions. [Ibn Kathīr]

Allah had appointed Friday as the day of congregation and festivity for the people, but the previous nations were not fortunate enough to appoint it as their sacred day. The Jews regarded Saturday as their day of congregation. The Christians made Sunday their day of congregation. Allah gave this Ummah the ability to elect Friday as their day of congregation. [as transmitted by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah ﷺ as quoted by Ibn Kathīr]

During the Days of Ignorance, Friday was known as 'Yaum-ul-'Arubah'. The first Arab to change the name of this day to 'Yaum-ul-Jumu'ah' was Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy. The Quraish used to gather or congregate on this day, and Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy used to deliver his sermon. This happened 560 years before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy was among the Holy Prophet's ﷺ forefathers. Even during the Days of Ignorance, Allah had kept him away from idol worship and granted him the ability to believe in the Oneness of Allah. He had also given people the glad tidings of the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. His greatness among Quraish may be judged from the fact that the year of his death, which occurred 560 years before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, was marked as the new *calendar era for computation* of dates. In Arabia, at first the calendar era was established when Ka'bah was built and dates were computed accordingly. Then Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy's death marked another era, and the dates were computed on that basis. When the Event of the Elephant occurred in the year of the birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that set in a new era of Arab calendar, and the dates were computed accordingly. In sum, the importance of 'Yaum-ul-Jumu'ah' had been recognized in Arabia before Islam in the time of Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy, to whom is ascribed the naming of the day as 'Yaum-ul-Jumu'ah'. [Maẓharī] According to some narrations, the Ansar of Madīnah used to gather and pray, before migration, on Friday before Jumu'ah prayer became obligatory, and they organized this on the basis of their own *Ijtihād* (assessment). [as transmitted by Abd-ur-Razzāq with an authentic chain of

narrators on the authority of Muḥammad Ibn Sīrīn, as quoted by Maẓharī]

إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلٰوةِ مِن يَّوۡمِ الۡجُمُعَةِ (...when the call for salah (prayer) is proclaimed on Friday, hasten for the remembrance of Allah, and leave off business ...62:9) The word *nidā'* refers to *adhān* or call for prayer. In the sentence فَاسۡعَوۡا إِلٰى ذِكۡرِ اللّٰهِ (...hasten to Allah's remembrance...) the word *sa'y* means to 'run or rush' as well as to 'take care of a task consciously'. In this context, the word is used in the latter sense, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited to go to prayer running or walking quickly. He said when anyone hears the *iqāmah*, he should proceed to offer the prayer with calmness and dignity. The verse implies that when believers are called to prayer on the Day of Jumu'ah, they should proceed to the remembrance of Allah, that is, they should carefully go to the mosque for Jumu'ah prayer and its Sermon. Just as a person running towards something does not pay heed to anything else, a Muslim should not pay attention, after the call, to anything besides *adhān* and *khuṭbah*. [Ibn Kathīr]. The phrase ذِكۡرِ اللّٰهِ (...Allah's remembrance...) could refer to Jumu'ah prayer as well as to Jumu'ah Sermon, which is one of the conditions of the validity of Jumu'ah prayer. Therefore, the phrase may most appropriately be interpreted as referring to the package of Jumu'ah prayer and Jumu'ah Sermon. [Maẓharī and others].

وَذَرُوا الۡبَيۡعَ (...and leave off business...) The literal meaning of the word '*bai*' is 'sale'. Although the intent is to ban all activities of buying and selling, the verse has mentioned 'sale' only, because when one aspect of trading is abandoned, the other aspect would automatically come to an end. If there is no one to sell, there will be no one to buy, because trade is a bilateral transaction..

The verse under comment indicates that the bar on the activities of buying and selling after the *adhān* of Jumu'ah needs to be implemented for practical purposes in such a way that the shops are closed at that particular time, so that all trading activities automatically come to a halt. The underlying wisdom is that there are uncountable number of customers and buyers, and it would not be possible to stop them all. The sellers and shopkeepers, however, are limited and they can be stopped. If they are stopped from selling, the buyers automatically will stop buying. Hence, the verse deemed it sufficient to impose the bar on 'sale'.

Special Note

The purport of the verse is to forbid, after the *adhān* of Jumu'ah, all activities that hamper preparation for Jumu'ah prayer and sermon activities such as trading, agriculture, labour or anything else, - but the Qur'ān mentions only selling. This could imply that only people living in towns and cities are commanded to offer the Jumu'ah prayer, and not the people residing in small villages, rural areas and jungles. Thus activities that are carried out by people in towns and cities, that is, trade activities, have been forbidden. But activities related to land, such as agricultural activities, are generally carried out in rural areas where Jumu'ah prayer is not required. Therefore, such activities are not mentioned here. However, The jurists of the Ummah unanimously agree that the word '*ba*' occurring in the verse does not refer only to 'selling' but to all such activities that can hinder preparing for and proceeding to the Jumu'ah prayer. Thus eating, drinking, sleeping, talking, and even studying are forbidden after Jumu'ah *adhān*. Only activities related to Jumu'ah may be carried out.

Adhān of Jumu'ah

In the beginning, there was only one *adhān* for Jumu'ah, which was called at the time of the Khuṭbah in front of the Imam. This situation existed in the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and this practice continued in the time of Sayyidna Abū Bakr ؓ and 'Umar ؓ However, the Muslim population grew by leaps and bounds in the time of Sayyidna 'Uthmān ؓ and spread in the outskirts of Madīnah. The *adhān* that was given in front of the Imam at the time of the khuṭbah could not be heard by the large Muslim population in the distance. He therefore initiated another *adhān* that was called in the trading area further from the mosque at his house in az-Zaura', which could be heard throughout Madīnah. None of the noble Companions objected to this. Thus this first *adhān* by consensus of the Companions became instituted. All trading and other activities that were forbidden after the Jumu'ah *adhān* before the Imam are now forbidden after the first *adhān* introduced by Sayyidna 'Uthman ؓ, taking into account the wordings of the Qur'ān نُودِىَ لِلصَّلٰوةِ مِن يَّوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ (when the call for *ṣalāh* (prayer) is proclaimed on Friday,). Details are available in the canonical collections of Traditions, commentaries and jurisprudence. There is no disagreement on the issue.

There is consensus of the entire Ummah that on Friday Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah shall be performed instead of Ṣalāt-uz-Ḍuhur and there is also consensus that Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah is not like the five daily prayers. There are some additional pre-requisites attached to it. The five daily prayers can be performed individually without congregation, or they could be performed in congregation with only two individuals. Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah, on the other hand, is not valid without congregation. There is disagreement among the jurists about the number of individuals that can constitute a congregation. The five daily prayers may validly be held anywhere, on the sea, ocean, mountains or in the jungles. But Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah on the other hand, is not valid in jungles or deserts according to any of the jurists. It is not obligatory on women, the sickly or the wayfarers. The latter should perform Ḍuhur prayer instead of Jumu'ah. There is disagreement among the jurists about the type of locality where Jumu'ah prayer may be held. According to Imām Shafi'ī, Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah is valid in a habitation where forty free, sane and adult men reside. If there are less than forty such men, it is not valid. According to Imām Mālik, the habitation must be such as to have houses adjacent to one another, and it must also have a bazaar or a market-place. According to Imām Abū Hanīfah رحمه الله تعالى, for Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah to be held validly the following pre-requisites are necessary: The habitation must be a town, city or a very large village which has streets, market places, a Muslim ruler and a judge who can restore the rights of people and decide cases of dispute. This is no occasion to go into details of the issue and proofs thereof. Venerable scholars have written separate books on the topic and clarified the position.

In brief, the generality of the command to attend Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah is restricted to a specific sector of the addressees. It is not obligatory on every members of the Muslim community, but for it to be compulsory, there are some conditions and pre-requisites. The disagreement exists only in identifying the pre-requisites. But where the pre-requisites apply and Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah becomes obligatory according to any school of thought, it is very important to observe it, and there is grave warnings for those who neglect it without any valid reason in terms of Sharī'ah. On the other hand, there is a promise of great reward and blessings for those who offer it fulfilling all its conditions and pre-requisites.

Blessings in Business after Jumu'ah

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلٰوةُ فَانْتَشِرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ (Then once the *ṣalāh* is finished, disperse in the land, and seek the grace of Allah...62:10). The preceding verses prohibited trading and all other worldly activities, after the *adhān* of Jumu'ah. The present verse permits those activities after the Jumu'ah prayer is over; we are allowed to spread throughout the land in search of our livelihood and sustenance.

When Sayyidna 'Irāk Ibn Mālik ﷺ finished his Jumu'ah prayer, he would come out and, standing on the threshold of the mosque, he would pray:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَجَبْتُ دَعْوَتَكَ وَصَلَّيْتُ فَرِيْضَتَكَ وَانْتَشَرْتُ كَمَا اَمَرْتَنِيْ فَارْزُقْنِيْ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ. (رواه ابن ابی حاتم، از ابن کثیر)

"O Allah, I responded to Your call and performed the Salah which You have prescribed for me as an obligation, and I am going out as You have commanded me in search of livelihood. So, grant me my livelihood out of Your grace. And You are the best giver of sustenance." [Transmitted by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, as quoted by Ibn Kathīr]. Some of the righteous elders have reported that anyone who performs his trading activities after Jumu'ah, Allah will grant him blessings seventy folds. [Ibn Kathīr]

It is reported from the righteous elders that whoever carries out his commercial activities after the prayer of Jumu'ah is favoured by Allah with seventy blessings. (Ibn Kathīr)

وَاذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ (And remember Allah much, so that you may be successful - 62:10). It means that commercial activities are though allowed after the prayer, one should not neglect Allah's remembrance during these activities as the infidels do. Even during such activities one must remain mindful of Allah and His remembrance.

Admonishing those who abandon the Imām while he is delivering the Jumu'ah Khuṭbah [Sermon]

وَإِذَا رَاَوْا تِجَارَةً اَوْ لَهْوَ انْفَضُّوْا اِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوْكَ قَآئِمًا ؕ قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهْوِ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ

And when they see some merchandise or amusement, they

break away to it, and leave you standing. Say, "What is with Allah is much better than the amusement and the merchandise, and Allah is the best giver of sustenance." (62:11)

The verse admonishes those who once abandoned the Friday sermon and attended some trade activity. Imām Ibn Kathīr says that this incident took place when the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to deliver the Friday sermon after the Jumu'ah prayer, as it happens on 'Īdain even in our days. It once happened that the Friday prayer had finished and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was delivering his sermon. Suddenly a trading caravan arrived in the market-place of Madīnah. Drums were beaten to announce the arrival of the caravan. The Friday prayer had finished and the sermon was in progress. Many of the noble Companions went away to the market-place. Only a few of them had remained behind with the Holy Prophet ﷺ who were about twelve in number [according to a narration in Marāsil of Abū Dāwūd]. According to some narratives, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "If all had gone, the entire valley of Madīnah would have been filled with the fire of punishment". [Transmitted by Abū Ya'lā, as quoted by Ibn Kathīr].

Muqatil, the leading scholar of Qur'ānic commentary, says that this was the trading caravan of Diḥyah Ibn Khalaf Kalbī, which had come from Syria. This caravan normally came to Madīnah with all the essentials, especially essential foodstuff. Whenever it arrived in Madīnah, and the people came to know about it, men and women all rushed towards it. Diḥyah Ibn Khalaf was not a Muslim until then. He became a Muslim later on.

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Abū Mālik said that that was a time when there was scarcity and dearth of things. [Maẓharī]. There were several factors on account of which a large group of the blessed Companions left the mosque when they heard the sound of the caravan. First, the *farḍ* prayer had already finished, and they did not know until then the status of the Friday sermon whether it was part of the *fard* prayer. Second, there was scarcity and dearth of essential goods and items. Third, buyers would rush to the caravan and they feared that if they did not make it in time, they would not be able to obtain their essentials. As a result, the noble Companions committed the mistake and the above Tradition sounded a warning, that is, if all of them had gone the Divine punishment would

have overtaken them. The current verse إِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً was revealed to admonish them and put them to shame. For this reason, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, since that day, changed the order of Friday sermon and prayer, delivering the sermons before the prayer. This is now the approved way [Sunnah]. [Ibn Kathīr]

The verse under comment instructs the Holy Prophet ﷺ to tell the people that what is with Allah is better than the merchandise and amusement of this world, that is, the reward of the Hereafter. It is not far-fetched to conceive that people who forsake business and earning of livelihood for the sake of prayer and sermon will attract ample blessings in their provision from Allah, even in this world, as was cited earlier from the righteous elders on the authority of Ibn Kathīr.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn

(The Hypocrites)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 11 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

إِذَا جَآءَكَ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ قَالُوْا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ۘ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ
لَرَسُوْلُهٗ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١﴾ اِتَّخَذُوْٓا أَيْمَانَهُمْ
جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ؕ إِنَّهُمْ سَآءَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ ذٰلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ اٰمَنُوْا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوْا فَطُبِعَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِذَا
رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ ؕ وَإِنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا تَسْمَعْ لِقَوْلِهِمْ ؕ كَأَنَّهُمْ
خُشُبٌ مُّسَنَّدَةٌ ؕ يَحْسَبُوْنَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ
فَاحْذَرْهُمْ ؕ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۫ أَنّٰى يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَإِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا
يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ لَوَّوْا رُءُوْسَهُمْ وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّوْنَ وَهُمْ
مُّسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ ؕ
لَنْ يَّغْفِرَ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ ؕ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾ هُمُ الَّذِيْنَ
يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَا تُنْفِقُوْا عَلٰى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ حَتّٰى يَنْفَضُّوْا ؕ وَلِلّٰهِ
خَزَآئِنُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلٰكِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾

يَقُولُونَ لَئِنْ رَّجَعْنَآ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ ط وَلِلّٰهِ
الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلٰكِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

When the hypocrites come to you, they say, "We bear witness that you are indeed the messenger of Allah." And Allah knows that you are really His messenger. And Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are actually liars. [1] **They have made their oaths a shield, and thus they have prevented (others) from the way of Allah. Surely evil is what they have been doing.** [2] **That is because they declared their faith (apparently), then disbelieved (secretly). Therefore a seal has been set on their hearts, and thus they do not understand.** [3] **And if you see them, their bodies would attract you, and if they speak, you would listen to their speech. (Yet, being devoid of substance,) it is as if they were propped up pieces of wood. They deem every shout (they hear) to be against them (out of cowardice). They are the enemy; so beware of them. May Allah destroy them. How perverted are they!** [4] **And when it is said to them, "Come on, Allah's Messenger will pray for your forgiveness", they twist their heads, and you see them turning away in arrogance.** [5] **It is equal in their case, whether you pray for their forgiveness or do not pray, Allah will not forgive them. Indeed Allah does not guide the sinning people.** [6] **They are the ones who say, "Do not spend on those who are with Allah's Messenger so that they disperse." And to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand.** [7] **They say, "If we return to Madīnah, the more honourable ones will drive out the meaner ones from there." And to Allah belongs the honour, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know.** [8]

Commentary

Background of Revelation

The incident, in which this Sūrah was revealed, took place in the campaign against Banul-Muṣṭaliq which happened, according to Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq, in Sha'bān 6 AH and, according to Qatādah and 'Urwah, in Sha'bān 5 AH. [Maẓharī]. According to Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq and most historians, the details of the incident is as follows: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ received the news that the leader of

Banul-Muṣṭaliq, namely, Ḥārith Ibn Dirar, is preparing for a campaign against him. Ḥārith Ibn Dirar was the father of Sayyidah Juwairiyah ﷺ who later on embraced Islam and became one of the Holy wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Ḥārith Ibn Dirār ﷺ himself later on embraced Islam.

Nevertheless, when the messenger of Allah ﷺ received the news about the campaign against him, he gathered a group of Muslims and went out to face them. Many hypocrites joined the Muslims to fight the *jihād* in the hope that they will receive a share in the spoils of war, because they, despite having disbelief in their hearts, were sure that Divine help will be on the Prophet's side, and he will attain victory.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ reached Banul-Muṣṭaliq's settlement, he faced Ḥārith Ibn Ḍirār's army near a well that was known as Muraisī'. Therefore, the campaign is also known as the battle of Muraisī'. The combatants arrayed themselves and shot arrows at each other. Many of the Banul-Muṣṭaliq's men were killed and others fled; and some men and women were captured as prisoners of war. Some of their belongings fell into Muslim hands as spoils of war. Allah granted victory to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the *jihād* came to an end.

Co-operation on the basis of Tribal, Racial, National or Regional Bias is the Slogan of Pre-Islamic Paganism

Whilst the Muslim army was still at the well of Muraisī', an unpleasant scene broke out between a *Muhājir* (emigrant) and an *Anṣārī* (helper). They quarrelled over the same water where the battle was fought. The Emigrant called their fellow-Emigrants for help, and the Helpers called the fellow-Helpers for help. Some individuals came forward to help their respective sides, and the dispute might have led to a fight between the Emigrants and the Helpers. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to know about this, he immediately went to the scene of dispute, and expressed his indignation, saying مَابَالُ دَعْوَى الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ "What is this slogan of paganism [that you call for defence on the basis of regional, racial and national bias]?" دَعُوهَا فَإِنَّهَا مُنْتِنَةٌ "Give up the slogan. It stinks." He said that every Muslim should help another Muslim brother, whether oppressor or oppressed. Helping the oppressed is quite obvious, but helping the oppressor implies to stop him from oppression. In all matters it is necessary to find out who is the oppressed and help him and who is the oppressor and stop him from oppressing, even though he may be his own

brother or father. The racial, lineal, regional or national pride and prejudice is a filthy slogan, and it gives out nothing but bad odour.

The speech of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ brought the quarrel to an end, and the dispute was thus quelled. The two people involved in this dispute were Jahjāh, the Emigrant, and Sinān Ibn Wabrah al-Juhanī, the Helper. In this matter, the former was more on the wrong, and the latter was wounded. Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit ؓ explained to Sinān Ibn Wabrah al-Juhanī ؓ, and he took understanding and pardoned Jahjāh ؓ. The oppressor and the oppressed thus became brothers.

The hypocrites had joined the Muslims for greed of receiving a share from the spoils. Their leader was 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy. Like other hypocrites, he called himself a Muslim for mundane benefits, but concealed enmity in his heart against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Muslims. When he came to know about the clash between the Muhājirs (Emigrants) and Anṣār (the Helpers), he found this an ideal opportunity to cause friction among the Muslims. So he addressed an assembly in which there were hypocrites and a Muslim Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ where he strongly provoked the Helpers with his fiery speech against the Emigrants, saying: "You have brought all this on yourselves. You have let them settle in your land and share your wealth and property. They are fed on your breads until they became strong and now they rival you. If you do not realize the consequences of your helping them, they will make your life miserable. Therefore, in future you should abandon them and stop helping them with your property, and they would themselves disperse to other areas. By Allah, when we go back to Madīnah the most honourable of the inhabitants of Madīnah shall drive out the meanest of them from there." He termed his own group and the Anṣār as 'the honourable ones', and [God forbid!] the Holy Prophet ﷺ along with the *muhajirin* as 'the meanest ones'. When Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ heard his speech, he retorted instantly: "By Allah, you are mean, low and despicable. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is successful by God-given honour, and by the love of the Muslims.

Since 'Abdullāh Ibn Ubayy wanted to keep his hypocrisy under a veil, he concealed his intention under the cover of the vague expression of 'the most honoured and the meanest'. When Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ made a sharp retort, he realized that his disbelief would be uncovered, he

apologized to Sayyidna Zaid Ibn Arqam ﷺ that he was merely joking and did not mean to do anything against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ﷺ left the assembly and went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and reported to him the whole story about 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy. This news was very disturbing and trying for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The colour of his blessed countenance changed. Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ﷺ was a young Companion at the time. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him: "Boy! Are you not perhaps lying?" Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ﷺ swore by Allah and said: "I heard these words with my own ears." The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him: "Are you sure you are not saying this on the basis of some suspicion?". Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ﷺ made the same reply. After that, the news of Ibn Ubayy's fiery speech spread throughout the Muslim army. No one spoke anything but about this speech. On the other hand, the Helpers reproached Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ﷺ. They said that he has accused the venerable leader of the nation (that is, Ibn Ubayy) and severed kinship ties with him. Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ﷺ swore by Allah and said that in the entire tribe of Khazraj, Ibn Ubayy was the dearest person to him, but when he uttered the unpleasant words against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he could not hold himself. "Even if that were my father," he went on, "I would have certainly reported his speech to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."

When Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ heard the story, he said: "O Allah's Messenger! Permit me to behead this hypocrite." According to another narration, Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ said: "Permit 'Abbād Ibn Bishr to cut off his head and present it to you." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that if he were to permit them to do that, the news will spread among people that Muḥammad ﷺ kills his own Comrades. As a result, he did not allow Ibn Ubayy to be killed. When this news about Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ reached 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy's son who also bore the same name as his father's, 'Abdullah, but he was a sincere Muslim, he immediately went up to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said: "If you wish my father to be killed because of his speech, then allow me to kill him and bring his head to you before you arise from your assembly. The entire tribe of Khazraj is a witness to the fact that no one is more serving and obedient to my parents than myself. But I will not tolerate any of their mischief against Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. If you allow anyone else to kill my father and he

kills him, then, I am afraid, when I see my father's killer walking freely, my tribal jealousy may overcome me and I may be tempted to kill him, and that might be the cause of my punishment." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I do not have the intention of killing him, nor have I instructed anyone else to kill him."

After this incident, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ announced, at an unusual time against his normal habit, that he would immediately set out on his journey back to Madīnah. So he mounted his she-camel Quṣwā' and started his journey at an unusual time. When the general body of the blessed Companions had set out on the journey, the Holy Prophet ﷺ called 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy and asked him: "Did you say this?" He took oath and denied everything that was imputed to him, and claimed that the boy, Zaid Ibn Arqam, was a liar. 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy was the respectable chief of his people. All the people felt that may be Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ was under some misconception, and Ibn Ubayy did not say it as was conveyed.

In any case, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ accepted Ibn Ubayy's oath and explanation. The reproach of the people against Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ was further aggravated. This embarrassed him and he hid himself from the people. Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ travelled with the entire Muslim army the whole day and night and the next morning, until the bright sun was out. Then he, together with the army, halted in a place. They were all exhausted on account of the long and strenuous journey. As soon as they touched the ground, they fell into deep sleep.

The narrator reports that the purpose of this unusually immediate and long journey was to close the chapter of the story of Ibn Ubayy, which had by and by spread among the entire Muslim community, and they talked about it all the time.

After that, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ started the journey, in the course of which Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit ؓ suggested to Ibn Ubayy to approach the Holy Prophet ﷺ and admit his guilt before him who would pray Allah for his pardon and he would attain salvation. When he heard this suggestion, he turned his head away. No Qur'ānic verses pertaining to Ibn Ubayy were revealed until then, but when he turned himself away in haughty arrogance, Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit ؓ

said: "Certainly, the Qur'ān will reveal verses pertaining to your turning down the advice."

While the Holy Prophet ﷺ was on his journey, Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ came near him again and again, and he was firm that since this hypocrite has called him a liar and embarrassed him in front of the entire nation. Allah would surely reveal verses to clear him and give the lie to the hypocrite. Suddenly Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ noticed that the Holy Prophet ﷺ entered into the state that he experienced when he received revelation: He started breathing heavily, his forehead dripped with perspiration and his mount, the she-camel, began to feel the weight of the revelation. Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ sensed that some revelation was coming down regarding that matter. When that state of revelation was over, and, because his own mount was closer to the mount of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he held the ear of Zaid ؓ and said يَا غُلَامُ صَدَّقَ اللّٰهُ حَدِيثَكَ وَنَزَلَتْ سُورَةُ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ فِى ابْنِ اُبَيِّ مِنْ اَوَّلِهَا اِلٰى اٰخِرِهَا "O Boy, Allah has confirmed the veracity of your statement, and the entire Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn - from the beginning to the end - has been revealed in connection with Ibn Ubayy's incident."

This shows that Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn was revealed in the course of the journey. According to Baghawī's narration, however, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had reached Madīnah and Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ was hiding himself in the house for fear of reprisal, when this Surah was revealed. And Allah knows best!

According to another narration, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ approached Madīnah at the valley of 'Aqiq, 'Abdullah, the son of the hypocrite 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy, who was a faithful believer, went forward and searched through the throng of mounts and, finding his father's mount, made it sit. He placed his foot on its knees and said to his father: "By Allah! You cannot enter Madīnah unless the Messenger of Allah permits you, and unless you clarify who are the most honourable inhabitants of Madīnah that will expel the meanest ones. Tell me who is the most honourable one, the Messenger of Allah or you? " Passers-by were reproaching 'Abdullah as to how unkindly he was treating his father. By then the mount of Allah's Messenger ﷺ came near. He inquired what was happening. People said that 'Abdullah has barred his father's entry into Madīnah unless Allah's Messenger permits him. The

Holy Prophet ﷺ saw that the hypocritical Ibn Ubayy declared to his son that he himself was the meanest of the citizens of Madīnah, even meaner than children and women, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ the most honourable of them. At this, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to the son: "Leave his way; let him enter." The son then let him enter.

Only this much is the story of the revelation of Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn. At the beginning of the story, a concise reference was made to the campaign of Banul-Muṣṭaliq where it was shown that the real person responsible for the campaign was Ḥārith Ibn Ḍirār who at that time was not a Muslim but embraced Islam later. He was the father of Sayyidah Juwairiyah رضي الله عنها who too was not a Muslim but embraced Islam later, and became one of the noble wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Musnad of Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd and others record that when Banul-Muṣṭaliq were defeated, spoils of war, together with prisoners of war, fell into Muslim hands. According to Islamic Law, all prisoners and spoils of war were distributed among the Mujāhidīn. Among the prisoners of war was Juwairiyah رضي الله عنها the daughter of Ḥārith Ibn Ḍarār. She fell to the lot of Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qais Ibn Shammās. He entered into the contract of *kitābah* to set her free in lieu of a specified sum of money. [1]

According to Sayyidah Juwairiyah's رضي الله عنها contract of *kitābah*, the sum specified was very large and she could not pay off the large sum of money to purchase her freedom. She came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said: "I have embraced Islam and I bear witness that there is only One Allah and He has no partners, and that you are Allah's Messenger." Then she went on to narrate her story: "I fell to the lot of Thābit Ibn Qais Ibn Shammās, but we entered into the contract of *kitābah* and the sum specified in the contract is so large that I cannot manage. Please do help me." The Holy Prophet ﷺ acceded to her request. In addition, he expressed his intention to emancipate her and marry her. For Sayyidah Juwairiyah رضي الله عنها, this was a great boon. How could she refuse to accept this offer? She accepted the offer whole-heartedly, and thus became one of the noble wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah Juwairiyah رضي الله عنها says that three days before the Holy Prophet ﷺ came for the campaign of Banul-Muṣṭaliq, 'I saw in my dream that the moon arose in Yathrib and it

(1) For fuller explanation of the contract of *kitābah*, see volume 6, pp.426-427 of this book under the commentary of Sūrah 24:33. (Muḥammad Taqi Usmani)

came and fell in my lap. I did not narrate this dream to anyone at that time. Now I have seen its interpretation with my own eyes.'

She was the daughter of the leader of her nation. When she became one of the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it exerted a great influence on the entire tribe. One advantage that accrued to all women captured with her was that all of them were emancipated. They were relatives of the Mother of the Faithful. The Muslims set free all slave-girls related to her when they came to know of her joining the rank of the Mother of the Faithful. They felt that it is disrespectful to keep any of her relatives as a slave-girl. About one hundred of them were emancipated with her. Her father saw a miracle of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and embraced Islam.

The Above Story Imparts Guiding Principles on Important Issues

The circumstances, under which Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn was revealed, indeed help us understand the basic interpretation of the Sūrah. Additionally, they bring out some important guiding principles related to moral or ethical, political and social issues. That is why the full story has been fully recounted here. The guiding principles derived from this story are given below:

The Foundation Stone of Islamic Polity: Establishment of Islamic Brotherhood which Aims at Ending Colour, Racial and Linguistic Discriminations, and Indigenous-Alien Prejudices

The episode of the dispute that broke out between an Emigrant and a Helper, and each side calling their fellow-Emigrants and their fellow-Helpers respectively for help was the icon of paganism which the Holy Prophet ﷺ destroyed. He established the principle that all believers are brothers, regardless of their race, colour, language, or nationality. The bond of brotherhood the Holy Prophet ﷺ established between the Refugees and the Helpers had made them like real brothers. It is, however, the ancient Satanic network to get people involved in mutual dispute and quarrel on the basis of nationality, race, language, colour and regionalism. Satan calls for mutual co-operation and help on this basis alone. This necessarily results in blocking out the Islamic concept of mutual co-operation which is based on Truth, justice, fair play and equity *vis-à-vis* the un-Islamic co-operation based on race and nationalism taken place. In this way, the Satan causes friction among Muslims. In this

instance also a similar situation would have developed if the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not arrive on the scene in time and quell the dispute and said to them that it was the stinking slogan of paganism and that they should give it up. He re-established them on the Qur'ānic principle of mutual co-operation تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوٰى وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ (And help each other in righteousness and piety, and do not help each other in sin and aggression....5:2) In other words, the standard for Muslims to help others or to receive help from others is good will, justice, fair play and equity. They should co-operate mutually on this basis, even though the others may belong to another race, ethnic group, or to another region. They should not unite in one conjoint to co-operate in sin and injustice, even though he may be father or brother. This is the just and rational foundation which Islam has laid, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself took care of this every step of the way and commanded everyone to follow the principle. In his Farewell Address, he said that all customs of paganism are trampled under his feet. The idols of discrimination of Arab-non-Arab, white-black and indigenous- aliens have been broken. Islamic principle of mutual help and co-operation is Truth and justice. All should apply it.

Another lesson that stems from this story is that the enemies of Islam since time immemorial use nationalism and regionalism to cause friction, and break up the Muslim Community. Whenever the opportunity arises, they split them up.

Alas, the Muslims have long forgotten this lesson, and the enemies have once more set up the same Satanic network to break up Islamic unity. The Muslims all over the world have put the religion and the religious principles into oblivion. As a result, they have become victims of civil wars. Their united front to fight disbelief has been smashed. The Muslim world is divided not only into Arabs and non-Arabs, but further divided into Egyptian, Syrian, Ḥijāzī and Yemeni. In the Indo-Pak sub-continent, the Punjabis, Bengalis, Sindhis, Hindis, Pathans and Balochis are victims of mutual differences. To Allah we direct our complaint! The enemies of Islam are toying with our differences. As a result, they are overcoming us in all fields, and we are defeated everywhere. We have developed a slavish mentality and are forced to take refuge in them. Even today we can see with our open eyes Divine

help and assistance coming to us, provided we adopt the Qur'ānic principles and the guidance of Allah's Messenger ﷺ; provided we adhere to a strong Islamic brotherhood instead of showing a slavish devotion to the lifestyle of others; and provided we break down the idols of colour, race, language and region.

The Noble Companions' Unparalleled Adherence to Islamic Principles and their Lofty Station

This incident further shows that though the Satan made some people raise the slogan of paganism temporarily, the 'Īmān was so engrossed in their hearts that the slightest admonition was sufficient to jolt them into repenting. They had such a high degree of love and reverence for Allah and His Messenger ﷺ that no relationship and sense of nationality could act as a barrier against it. An eloquent testimony of that is contained in the statement of Zaid Ibn Arqam رضي الله عنه. He himself was a member of the tribe of Khazraj and Ibn Ubayy was the leader of that tribe, and the former loved and venerated the latter most dearly, but he could not tolerate the provocative words uttered against the Refugee Muslims and Allah's Messenger ﷺ by his leader, and he made a blunt reply then and there. Then he went up to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and complained to him about the hypocrite. The tribal-worshippers of the present age would never have dared to take the complaint of their leaders to the Holy Prophet ﷺ

The attitude of Ibn Ubayy's son 'Abdullah in this incident makes it crystal clear that his real love and veneration was dedicated to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. When he heard him utter words against them, he went to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and sought his consent to cut off his father's head. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not permit him, he made his father's mount sit, when he approached Madīnah, blocked his way and forced him to admit that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is 'the most honourable' and that he himself is 'the meanest one'. He did not open the way for his father before the Holy Prophet's ﷺ permission.

Besides, the idols of nation-worship and land-worship were broken to pieces in the battles of Badr, Uḥud and Aḥzāb, which proved that all Muslims are brothers, no matter which nationality, country, colour or language group they belong to. Anyone who does not believe in Allah and His Messenger ﷺ is an enemy, even though he may be his own real

brother or father.

هزار خویش که بیگانه از خدا باشد......فدائے یك تنِ بیگانه کآشنا باشد

Thousands of relatives who are alien to Allah

May be sacrificed to an alien who is faithful to Allah.

Taking Care of General Welfare of Muslims: Protecting them from Misunderstanding

Another point illustrated by this incident is that an act which is permissible in itself should be avoided if it may create a misunderstanding in the mind of a Muslim, or may provide an opportunity for the enemies to spread misunderstanding among them. Thus, despite the fact that Ibn Ubayy's hypocrisy was exposed openly, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not permit Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه to behead him when he sought his permission, because the enemies could create misunderstanding in the public minds that Muḥammad ﷺ killed his own Comrades. But it should be noted that, as other traditions prove, such acts may be abandoned only when they are not from the basic objectives of Sharī'ah, though they may be laudable. As for the basic objectives of Sharī'ah, they cannot be abandoned for such an apprehension. Instead, attempts must be made to remove the danger and do the work dictated by the objectives of Sharī'ah.

Let us now study some specific sentences of the Sūrah:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (And when it is said to them, "Come on, and Allah's Messenger will pray for your forgiveness"...63:5) When this Sūrah exposed the false oaths of 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, people went up to him to advise him to approach the Holy Prophet ﷺ and admit his guilt. They said that he has still time to request the Holy Messenger ﷺ to pray to Allah to forgive him. To this, he responded by turning his head around and saying arrogantly: " I believed when you asked me to believe; I paid *Zakāh* when you asked to; and now the only thing left is for you to ask me to prostrate to Muḥammad ﷺ." The above verses were revealed on this occasion, which make plain that he has no faith, and therefore asking forgiveness for him cannot benefit him in any way.

Ibn Ubayy, after this incident, returned to Madīnah, lived for a few days, and died soon thereafter. [Maẓharī].

هُمُ الَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَاتُنْفِقُوْا عَلٰى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ حَتّٰى يَنْفَضُّوْا (They are the ones who say, "Do not spend on those who are with Allah's Messenger, so that they disperse...63:7) This verse points out to the foolish statement that Ibn Ubayy had made at the time of the dispute between Jahjāh, the Emigrant, and Sinān, the Helper. Allah Ta'ālā has responded to it that these foolish people have presumed that the Emigrants need their donations and they are their sustainers, while all treasures of heavens and the earth belong to Allah. If He wills, He can provide to them everything without any contribution from their side. Since the statement made by Ibn Ubayy was an evidence of his foolishness, the Holy Qur'ān states: لَايَفْقَهُوْنَ "...but the hypocrites do not understand [7]."

يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَئِنْ رَّجَعْنَآ اِلَى الْمَدِيْنَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْاَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْاَذَلَّ (They say, "If we return to Madīnah, the more honourable ones will drive out the meaner ones from there."....63:8) This too is the statement of Ibn Ubayy, the hypocrite. Although the words used by him were ambiguous, the intention was clear. He termed himself and the natives of Madīnah as 'honourable' and the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Emigrant Companions as (God forbid!) the 'meanest'. He thus provoked the Helpers of Madīnah against the Emigrants that the former should drive out the latter from their city. In answer to this, Allah recoiled his boastful statement against himself by pointing out that if those who are really 'honourable' drive out those who are really the 'meanest', it will go against themselves, because all honour belongs to Him, His Messenger and the believers. The hypocrites, however, are unaware of this because of their ignorance. The concluding phrase of this verse is لَايَعْلَمُوْنَ '...but the hypocrites do not know. [8]' This may be contrasted with the concluding phrase of verse لَايَفْقَهُوْنَ 'but they do not understand'. The reason for the distinction between 'do not understand' and ' do not know' is as follows: If a person thinks that he is the provider of others, this is completely irrational. This is the sign of his foolishness. Honour and dishonour, on the other hand, can fall to anyone's lot. Therefore, if he errs in his judgement, this is ignorance of facts or true state of affairs. Thus we have here لَايَعْلَمُوْنَ '...but the hypocrites do not know. [8]'

Verses 9 - 11

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَاتُلْهِكُمْ اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ۚ

وَمَنْ يَّفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَاَنْفِقُوْا مِنْ مَّا
رَزَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ اَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُوْلَ رَبِّ لَوْلَآ اَخَّرْتَنِيْٓ
اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ قَرِيْبٍ ۙ فَاَصَّدَّقَ وَاَكُنْ مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَنْ يُّؤَخِّرَ
اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِذَا جَآءَ اَجَلُهَا ۭ وَاللّٰهُ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾

O those who believe, your riches and your children must not divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And those who do that are the losers. [9] **And spend out of what We have given to you before death overtakes one of you and he says, "My Lord, would you not respite me to a near term, and I will pay *ṣadaqah* (alms) and will become one of the righteous."** [10] **And Allah will never respite anyone, once his appointed time will come. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.** [11]

Commentary

Linkage between Sections [1] and [2]

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ

O those who believe, your riches and your children must not divert you from the remembrance of Allah. (63:9)

The preceding section dealt with the hypocrites, their false oaths and their conspiracies. In sum, their nefarious activities were based on their excessive love for the worldly gains. They outwardly claimed to be Muslims, so that they might not suffer loss at the hands of the sincere Muslims, and might share the spoils of war with them. One of the consequences of this mentality was their design to stop spending on the Emigrant Companions. Now, this second section addresses the sincere and faithful believers, and warns them against being intoxicated with the love of this world, as the hypocrites foolishly did. There are two major objects in this world that divert a person from the remembrance of Allah: [1] wealth; and [2] children. Therefore, these two things have been named in particular. Otherwise, it refers to all the means of enjoyments in the world. The import of the verse is that love of wealth and children to some extent is not bad. Being engaged with them to a certain degree is not only permissible but also obligatory. But there is a dividing line between permissible and impermissible love that must always be borne in mind.

The criterion is that this love must not deviate one from Allah's remembrance. The word *dhikr* (remembrance) in this context has been variously interpreted by different commentators. Some say it refers to the five daily prayers, while others say it refers to Zakāh or Ḥajj. Some refer it to the Qur'ān. Ḥasan Baṣrī expresses the view that the word *dhikr* here refers to all forms of obedience and worship. This is the most comprehensive interpretation. [Qurṭubī]

In short, we are permitted to be involved in the material wealth up to the degree that it does not divert us from Allah's obedience. If one becomes engrossed in the material wealth or become absorbed in the forbidden or abominable things, which divert him from our duties and obligations towards Allah, the sentence أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ "...they are the losers" will apply, because he has sold the great and eternal reward of the Hereafter for the petty and perishable enjoyment of this world. What loss could be greater than this!

وَاَنْفِقُوْا مِنْ مَّا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ اَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ (And spend out of what We have given to you before death comes to one of you...63:10) 'Coming of death' in this verse refers to 'witnessing the signs of death'. The verse exhorts the believers to make the best of their opportunities to spend in the way of Allah, in the state of good health and strength, before the signs of death appear, and thus they should have their degrees of rank elevated in the Hereafter. Once death overtakes them, the opportunity to spend will be lost, and the wealth will be of no use. Earlier on it was learned that the word *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) refers to all forms of obedience and following the dictates of Sharī'ah, which include spending wealth as due. Despite that, spending wealth on this occasion has been mentioned separately. There may be two reasons for it: Firstly, one of the major objects that divert man from acting upon the sacred laws of Sharī'ah is wealth. Therefore, spending wealth, in the form of Zakāh, 'Ushr, Ḥajj and so on, is specifically mentioned. Secondly, when a person sees the signs of death, it is not in his power to perform his missed prayers, or his missed Ḥajj, Ramaḍān fasts. However, the wealth is in front of him, and he is sure that soon it will slip out of his hand. So he may spend the wealth to compensate his shortfalls in worship and so attain salvation from such shortcomings. Furthermore, charity [*ṣadaqah*] is efficacious in averting calamities and punishment.

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Muslim record on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that a person asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "Which *ṣadaqah* attracts most reward?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "To spend in Allah's way when a person is in a state of good health, and yet he fears, in view of future needs, that if he spends the wealth he may become poor." Then he continued: "Do not delay spending in Allah's way until such time when your death reaches your throat, and at that moment you instruct (your heirs), 'Give this much to so-and-so and give this much for such and such work.'"

فَيَقُوْلَ رَبِّ لَوْلَآ اَخَّرْتَنِيْٓ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ قَرِيْبٍ (...and he says, "My Lord, would you not respite me to a near term, and I will pay *ṣadaqah* (alms) and will become one of the righteous....63:10) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says, in the interpretation of this verse, that if *Zakāh* was due on a person and he failed to pay it, and *Ḥajj* was obligatory and he failed to perform it, he will express this desire when death approaches him. He will want a little more time so that he can give *ṣadaqah* and اَكُنْ مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ 'become one of the righteous' [10] In other words, he will also desire that he is given a little more time so that he may act righteously by fulfilling his obligations that he has missed out and repent and ask pardon for the forbidden and abominable acts he might have indulged in. But Allah makes it clear in the next verse that once his time has come, He will not give any more time to anyone. This desire at that stage is futile.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn
Ends here

Sūrah At-Taghābun

(Loss and Gain)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 18 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 10

يُسَبِّحُ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ز
وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ
وَّمِنْكُمْ مُّؤْمِنٌ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَاَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ ۚ وَاِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٣﴾
يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّوْنَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُوْنَ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
عَلِيْمٌ ۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿٤﴾ اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ نَبَؤُا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ز
فَذَاقُوْا وَبَالَ اَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهٗ كَانَتْ تَّاْتِيْهِمْ
رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَقَالُوْٓا اَبَشَرٌ يَّهْدُوْنَنَا ز فَكَفَرُوْا وَتَوَلَّوْا وَّاسْتَغْنَى اللّٰهُ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيْدٌ ﴿٦﴾ زَعَمَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنْ لَّنْ يُّبْعَثُوْا ؕ قُلْ بَلٰى
وَرَبِّيْ لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ ؕ وَذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرٌ ﴿٧﴾
فَاٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَالنُّوْرِ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْزَلْنَا ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ
﴿٨﴾ يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذٰلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ ؕ وَمَنْ يُّؤْمِنْ ۢ

بِاللّٰهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُّكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّاٰتِهٖ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ؕ وَبِئْسَ
الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٠﴾ ع

Allah's purity is pronounced by all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. To Him belongs the kingdom, and for Him is all praise, and He is powerful over every thing. [1] He is the One who created you, then some of you are disbelievers, and some of you are believers. And Allah is Watchful of what you do. [2] He has created the heavens and the earth with truth, and shaped your figures, and made your figures good, and to Him is the final return. [3] He knows all that is in the heavens and the earth, and He knows whatever you conceal and whatever you reveal. And Allah is All-Aware of what lies in the hearts. [4] Did the news of those people not come to you who disbelieved earlier, and tasted (in this world) the evil consequence of their conduct, and for them (in the Hereafter) there is a painful punishment? [5] That is because their messengers used to bring them clear proofs, but they said, "Shall some mortals give us guidance?" Thus they disbelieved and turned away, and Allah did not care. And Allah is All-Independent, Ever-Praised. [6] The disbelievers claim that they will never be raised again (after death). Say, "Why not? By my Lord, you will be raised again, then you will be told about what you did. And that is easy for Allah." [7] So, believe in Allah and His Messenger, and in the light We have sent down. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do. [8] (Be mindful of) the day He will gather you for the Day of Gathering. That will be the Day of loss and gain. And whoever believes in Allah, and does righteously, He will write off his evil deeds, and will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow, where they will live forever. That is the great achievement. [9] And those who disbelieve and reject Our signs_they are the people of the Fire. And it is an evil place to return. [10]

Commentary

هُوَالَّذِىْ خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَّمِنْكُمْ مُّؤْمِنٌ (He is the One who created you, then

some of you are disbelievers, and some of you are believers...64:2) In the phrase *fa-minkum,* the particle '*fa*' [translated here as 'then'] denotes 'one thing happening after another '. In this instance, the phrase '*khalaqakum*' [created you] indicates that at the inception of creation there were no unbelievers [*kāfirs*]. Human beings were, subsequently, divided into believers and non-believers by their own free will and choice with which Allah has invested them. They are rewarded or punished on account of exercising the free will and choice. A Prophetic Tradition states: كُلُّ مَوْلُوْدٍ يُوْلَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ وَيُنَصِّرَانِهِ (Everyone is born a Muslim, but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian...) [Qurṭubī].

Two Nations Theory

The Holy Qur'ān has divided mankind here into two groups: a believing group and a non-believing one. This indicates that the children of 'Ādam عليه السلام is one single brotherhood, and all human beings are members of this brotherhood. *Kufr* [unbelief] is the only dividing line that severs relationship with this brotherhood and creates another group. He who becomes a *Kāfir* has severed the relationship of human brotherhood. Thus group-formation can only take place on the basis of *'Īmān* and *Kufr*. Neither colour nor language, neither lineage nor family, neither land, territory or geographical region can divide human brotherhood into rival groups. The offspring of one father may live in different cities, or use different languages, or have different colours, but it does not divide them into different groups. Despite differences of colour, language, country or territory, they are members of the same brotherhood. No sane person will ever regard them as different groups.

In the Days of Ignorance, ethnicity and tribal divisions had become the basis of factionalism, but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ broke down these idols, which they pursued. By the express text of the Holy Qur'ān إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ إِخْوَةٌ 'All believers are but brothers' irrespective of their country or territory, their colour or family, or their language. They all belong to one brotherhood. So likewise, the non-believers, in the sight of Islam, belong to a single community.

The above verse also bears evidence to the fact that Allah has divided all mankind into two groups - the believers and the non-believers. The variety of languages and colours, according to the Qur'ān, is no doubt a sign of the perfect power of Allah, and having many socio-economic

benefits, it is a great blessing, but it is not permitted to use it as the basis of factionalism or group-formation among mankind.

Moreover, the binary division of mankind on the basis of *'Īmān* and *Kufr* is a matter of free will and choice. Both *'Īmān* and *Kufr* may be adopted by one's free will. If a person chooses out of his own free will to abandon his group and join another, he can do it very easily: He may give up his articles of faith, choose another faith and thus join the other group. On the other hand, the affiliations of race, lineage, colour, language or territory are not within the power or control of anyone. No one can change his affiliation with his race, colour or language.

It was this Islamic brotherhood that, in a short span of time, joined uncountable members of believers in a single string, from east to west, north to south, white and black, and Arabs and non-Arabs, whose might and power could not be resisted by the nations of the world, and therefore they revived once again the idols that were shattered by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Islam. They partitioned the one mighty *ummah* of Muslims into small bits and pieces of nations based on territory, homeland, language and colour, race and lineage, and caused them to collide with one another. This cleared the way for the enemies of Islam to attack, the consequences of which are visible to every eye today. The Muslims of east and west were one nation and one heart, but are now divided into small groups fighting one another. As against this, the Satanic forces of *Kufr*, despite mutual disagreements, look like a united force against the Muslims.

وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ (...and shaped your figures, and made your figures good...64:3) Shaping the figures of the creatures is one of the exclusive attributes of Allah, That is why *Al-Musawwiru* [the Shaper] is one of His attributive names. If we analyze or look carefully into the universe, there are several classes of things. Each class has several species and each species has several sexes. Each sex has billions of members. No single shape ever resembles another shape. Among humankind, for instance, on account of differences of country or territory, or differences of stock and nations, there is clear distinction in the shapes and faces of individuals. The face and shape of each individual is so amazingly unique and that it baffles the human imagination. The human face is no more than six to seven square inches, and there are uncountable faces of the same type,

and yet one face does not look exactly like the other one so that distinguishing one from the other would be difficult. The present verse mentions figure-making as one of the Divine blessings and immediately thereafter it goes on to say فَاَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ (and made your figures good). In the entire universe, Allah made the human shape the most beautiful. No matter how ugly a man or an individual might seem in his community, he is still beautiful in his own right, relative to the shapes of all other non-human creatures.

فَقَالُوْٓا اَبَشَرٌ يَّهْدُوْنَنَا (...but they said, "Shall some mortals give us guidance?"...64:6) Though the word *bashar* [mortal(s)] is singular, but in meaning it is plural. Therefore, the verb يَهْدُوْنَنَا 'give us guidance' is plural. All unbelievers held the notion that prophets and messengers cannot be human beings. The Qur'ān has time and again falsified and refuted this notion of the unbelievers. Alas, there is also a group of Muslims who denies the mortality of the Allah's Messenger. They need to think in which direction they are moving. His mortality is not contradictory to his prophet-hood, nor is it incompatible with his high station of messenger-ship, nor is his being a Messenger inconsistent with his being a Nūr (light). He is Nūr (light) as well as a mortal. It is a false analogy to compare his light with that of a lamp or of the sun or the moon.

فَاٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَالنُّوْرِ الَّذِیْٓ اَنْزَلْنَا (So, believe in Allah and His Messenger, and in the light We have sent down...64:8) The word Nūr [light] in this context refers to the Qur'ān. 'Light' fulfils two functions: In the first place it is itself luminous and in the second place it makes other things luminous and bright. The Qur'ān, on account of its miraculous nature, is itself luminous, and it illuminates what pleases or displeases Allah, the sacred laws, injunctions and commands, and the realities of the Hereafter, which human beings ought to know.

The Reason Why the Day of Gathering is called the Day of Loss and Gain

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذٰلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ ([Be mindful of] the day when He will gather you for the Day of Gathering. That will be the Day of loss and gain...64:9) 'The Day of Gathering' and 'The Day of Loss and Gain' are both the names of the Day of Judgement. The reason why that day is called 'The Day of Gathering' is quite obvious. On that day all creations, the earlier generations as well as the later generations, will be brought

together to give account of their deeds and for reward and punishment. The reason for calling the day as 'The Day of Loss and Gain' is because the word *taghābun* is derived from *ghabn* which means 'loss'. Financial loss as well as mental deficiency is referred to as *ghabn*. Imām Rāghib Iṣfahānī in his *Mufradā-ul-Qur'ān* says that when the word refers to financial loss, it is expressed in the passive voice thus *ghubina fulānun* 'so-and-so suffered financial loss' When one wants to say that 'he was or became deficient in his opinion or judgement', one would express it thus *ghabina* from the triliteral verb form, the second radical being vowelled with *kasrah* [-i-] on the measure of *sami'a*. The word *taghābun* is a two-way process and signifies 'mutuality of actions', where two parties mutually cause loss to each other, or they make manifest each other's loss. In the context of this verse, however, it is one-sided or one-way process of making manifest of non-believer's loss. The latter sense is also its recognized use. 'The Day of Loss and Gain' is so called because, according to authentic Traditions, Allah has created two abodes for everyone in the Hereafter_one in Hell and another in Paradise. Before admitting the righteous believers to Paradise, they will be shown the abode in Hell, which they would have received if they failed to believe and act righteously, so that they may appreciate their abode in Paradise more highly and thank Allah more profoundly. On the other hand, the non-believers will be shown their abode in Paradise, which they would have received had they believed and acted righteously, so that they may regret more bitterly and be more remorseful. These narratives also tell us that the abodes in Paradise that were prepared for the non-believers will be given to the believers in Paradise, and the abodes in Hell that were prepared for the believers will be given to the non-believers in Hell. These Traditions are elaborately recorded in the two Ṣaḥīḥs and other collections of Traditions. When the inmates of Paradise will attain the places originally prepared for the disbelievers, the latter will realize what they have lost and what they have gained.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Tirmidhī and others record on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the noble Companions: "Do you know who is a pauper?" They replied: "One who has no possessions." The Messenger ﷺ said that a pauper in my community is one who will come on the Day of Judgement with a heap of

righteous deeds, such as prayers, fasting, alms-giving and so on, but he might have reviled someone in the world, or he might have slandered another person, or he might have killed or murdered some other person, and he might have taken away someone's property unlawfully. All these people will gather around him and demand their rights. One will take away his prayers, another will snatch away his fasts, someone will take away his alms and a third person will carry away his other good deeds. When all his good deeds would be exhausted, the sins of the oppressed will be loaded on the oppressor, and in this way the score will be settled. Consequently, he will be pushed into the Fire of Hell. [Maẓharī].

It is recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, "Whoever has an obligation towards someone should discharge it or ask his obligor to forgive it here in this world. Otherwise, he will have no dirhams or dinars (money) there in the Hereafter to set off his liabilities. The obligors will be given the good deeds of the debtor in lieu of their unfulfilled rights. When his good deeds will be exhausted, the sins of the oppressed will be added to the account of the oppressor."

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and other leading authorities on Tafsīr have given the foregoing reason for naming the Day of Judgement as 'The Day of Loss and Gain'. Other authorities express the view that the grief of loss will not only be felt by the miserable non-believers, but also by the righteous believers. The latter will feel a sense of loss in that they will bitterly regret that they wasted much of their time in life and failed to carry out more good deeds, so as to attain more blessings and favours in Paradise, as is stated in a Prophetic Tradition.

مَنْ جَلَسَ مَجْلِسًا لَّمْ يَذْكُرِ اللّٰهَ فِيْهِ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ تِرَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

(He who sits in an assembly and does not remember Allah in the entire session, this assembly will be a source of bitter regret for him.)

Qurṭubī writes that on that Day every believer will feel a sense of loss on account of shortcomings in the fulfillment of his duties and obligations in life. Naming the Judgement Day as the 'Day of Loss and Gain' is like its being named as 'The Day of (Bitter) Regret' in Sūrah Maryam, thus وَاَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ اِذْ قُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ 'And warn them of the Day of (Bitter) Regret when the affair will be resolved...19:39) Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī interprets this

verse as implying that on that day the unjust and unrighteous people will bitterly regret their shortcomings, and the righteous believers will regret their shortcomings in the performance of their righteous deeds. In this way, everyone on the Day of Judgement will regret and have a feeling of loss at his shortcomings. Therefore, this day is named as the 'Day of Loss and Gain'.

Verses 11 - 18

مَآ اَصَابَ مِنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ط وَمَنْ يُّؤْمِنْ بِاللّٰهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهٗ ط
وَاللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَاَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ ج فَاِنْ
تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاِنَّمَا عَلٰى رَسُوْلِنَا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٢﴾ اَللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ط
وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ مِنْ
اَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَ اَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوْهُمْ ج وَاِنْ تَعْفُوْا
وَتَصْفَحُوْا وَتَغْفِرُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّمَا اَمْوَالُكُمْ
وَاَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ط وَاللّٰهُ عِنْدَهٗ اَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ
وَاسْمَعُوْا وَاَطِيْعُوْا وَاَنْفِقُوْا خَيْرًا لِّاَنْفُسِكُمْ ط وَمَنْ يُّوْقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهٖ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اِنْ تُقْرِضُوا اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُّضٰعِفْهُ
لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ط وَاللّٰهُ شَكُوْرٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿١٨﴾

And no calamity befalls (one), but with the leave of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart. And Allah is All-Knowing about every thing. [11] **And obey Allah, and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, then Our Messenger has only to convey the message clearly.** [12] **Allah is such that there is no god but He. And in Allah alone the believers must place their trust.** [13] **O those who believe, among your wives and your children there are some enemies for you, so beware of them. And if you forgive and overlook and pardon, then Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [14]

Your riches and your children are but a trial. As for Allah, with Him is a great reward. [15] **So, observe *taqwā* (total obedience to Allah in awe of Him) as far as you can, and listen and obey, and spend (in Allah's way), it being good for you. And those who are saved from the greed of their souls are the successful.** [16] **If you advance a good loan to Allah, He will multiply it for you, and will forgive you. And Allah is Appreciative, Forbearing,** [17] **the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.** [18]

Commentary

مَآ اَصَابَ مِنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُّؤْمِنْ بِاللّٰهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهٗ (And no calamity befalls [one], but with the leave of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart...64:11) In other words, it is a reality that not even a particle can move without the Divine will. Without the will of Allah no one can harm or benefit anyone. If a person does not believe in Allah and the Divine destination, he would not have any means of comforting himself when a calamity befalls him. He receives it with despair, and gropes for means of alleviating it. A believer, on the other hand, who reposes his faith in Divine will and destination is guided by Allah, and his heart is filled with peace and tranquility. Allah will guide his heart to certainty of faith. Therefore, he will know with certainty that whatever difficulty afflicts him could never have missed him, and whatever adversity has missed him could never have afflicted him. As a result of this belief, he is promised a reward in the Hereafter, which he keeps in view all the time. This strong belief in the promise of a reward in the Hereafter alleviates the worst calamity of this world.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ مِنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَ اَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوْهُمْ (O those who believe, among your wives and your children there are some enemies for you, so beware of them...64:14) Tirmidhī, Ḥākim and others have recorded, with authentic chain of transmitters, on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵄, that this verse was revealed regarding those Muslims who embraced Islam in Makkah after the migration of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to Madīnah. They intended to migrate to Madīnah and join the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but their wives and children refused to allow them. [Rūḥ] This was the time when it was compulsory for every Muslim to migrate from Makkah. Therefore, the wives and children who stood in way of loyalty and obedience to Divine laws are referred to as their enemies, and it was

emphasized that they should beware of them, because none can be greater enemy than one who involves a person in the eternal punishment and everlasting Fire of Hell. 'Aṭā' Ibn Rabāḥ reports that this verse was revealed in connection with 'Auf Ibn Mālik Ashja'ī ﷺ. He was in Madīnah. Whenever the occasion arose to go to war or *jihād* and he would intend to participate in the *jihād*, his wife and children would complain: "In whose care are you leaving us?" He would be influenced by their complaint and change his mind. [Rūḥ and Ibn Kathīr]

These two narratives are not in conflict with each other. Both narratives, in their own right, can be the cause of revelation, because wife and children that stand in the way of obeying Allah's laws, whether migration or *Jihād*, they become the enemies of Allah.

وَإِنْ تَعْفُوا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ (And if you forgive and overlook and pardon, then Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful...64:14) The Muslims who were warned by the previous verse that their wives and children were their enemies, decided that they would treat their family members harshly. On that occasion, this part of the verse was revealed. The verse purports to say that 'although your wives and children behaved like enemies and stood in your way to perform your duty towards Allah, do not treat them harshly and mercilessly, but rather treat them politely and leniently. This is better for you because Allah loves forgiving and showing mercy.'

Ruling

Scholars have deduced from the above verse that if the family members do anything in violation of the sacred laws, it is not appropriate to be disappointed with them totally, or to be hostile towards them, or to hate or curse them. [Rūḥ]

Wealth and Children are a Trial

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ (Your riches and your children are but a trial...64:15) The word *fitnah* means 'test or trial'. The purport of the verse is to say that Allah tests man by means of his wealth and children as to whether he is so much engrossed in the love of wealth and children as to become heedless of Divine laws and injunctions, or he maintains his love for them within limits and remains heedful of his duties and obligations towards Allah.

The truth of the matter is that the love of wealth and children is a great trial for man. He mostly commits sins for their love, especially when he indulges in earning livelihood through unlawful means. According to a *ḥadīth*, some people will be brought on the Day of Judgment, and the people will look at him and say اَكَلَ عَيَالُه حَسَنَاتِه (His family ate up his good deeds.) [Rūḥ]. In another narration, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, referring to the children, said: مَبْخَلَةٌ مَّجْبَنَةٌ (They are the cause of one's miserliness and cowardice.) It means that on account of their love, man fails to spend in Allah's way, and on account of their love he fails to participate in Jihād. Some righteous elders have said, اَلْعَيَال سُوْسُ الطَّاعَات (Family is the weevil of obedience". A weevil is a small beetle that feeds on grain and seeds and destroys crops. Likewise, a family feeds on man's good deeds and destroys them.

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ (So, observe *taqwā* [total obedience to Allah in awe of Him] as far as you can...64:16) When the verse اِتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِه (...Observe *taqwā* as is His due...3:102] was revealed, the blessed Companions felt it very difficult, because it was impossible for anyone to observe *taqwā* of Allah 'as is due to Him'. On that occasion, the present verse was revealed which clarified that no imposition is made on man more than he can bear. *Taqwā* too must be observed as far as it is possible for man to observe. If a person tries to obey Allah totally in awe of Him, that will be sufficient in fulfilling Allah's due. [Rūḥ - condensed]

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Taghābun
Ends here

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭalāq
(The Divorce)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 12 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 7

يَاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَآءَ فَطَلِّقُوْهُنَّ لِعِدَّتِهِنَّ وَاَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ ج
وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ رَبَّكُمْ ج لَاتُخْرِجُوْهُنَّ مِنْ م بُيُوْتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ
يَّاْتِيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ ط وَتِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ ط وَمَنْ يَّتَعَدَّ حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ
فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهٗ ط لَا تَدْرِيْ لَعَلَّ اللّٰهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ اَمْرًا ﴿١﴾
فَاِذَا بَلَغْنَ اَجَلَهُنَّ فَاَمْسِكُوْهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوْفٍ اَوْفَارِقُوْهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوْفٍ
وَّاَشْهِدُوْا ذَوَيْ عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَاَقِيْمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلّٰهِ ط ذٰلِكُمْ يُوْعَظُ بِهٖ
مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ط وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مَخْرَجًا
﴿٢﴾ لا وَّيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَايَحْتَسِبُ ط وَمَنْ يَّتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ فَهُوَ
حَسْبُهٗ ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بَالِغُ اَمْرِهٖ ط قَدْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا ﴿٣﴾
وَالّٰٓـِٔيْ يَئِسْنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيْضِ مِنْ نِّسَآئِكُمْ اِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلٰثَةُ
اَشْهُرٍ وَّالّٰٓـِٔيْ لَمْ يَحِضْنَ ط وَاُولَاتُ الْاَحْمَالِ اَجَلُهُنَّ اَنْ يَّضَعْنَ
حَمْلَهُنَّ ط وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِهٖ يُسْرًا ﴿٤﴾ ذٰلِكَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ
اَنْزَلَهٗٓ اِلَيْكُمْ ط وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّاٰتِهٖ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهٗٓ اَجْرًا ﴿٥﴾

أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنتُم مِّن وُّجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارُّوهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا
عَلَيْهِنَّ ط وَإِن كُنَّ أُولَاتِ حَمْلٍ فَأَنفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَضَعْنَ
حَمْلَهُنَّ ج فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ ج وَأْتَمِرُوا بَيْنَكُم
بِمَعْرُوفٍ ج وَإِن تَعَاسَرْتُمْ فَسَتُرْضِعُ لَهُ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ لِيُنفِقْ ذُو سَعَةٍ
مِّن سَعَتِهِ ط وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ ط لَا يُكَلِّفُ
اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا ط سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ﴿٧﴾ ع

O prophet, when you people divorce women, divorce them at a time when the period of *''iddah* may start.[1] And count the period of *''iddah*, and fear Allah, your Lord. Do not expel them from their houses, nor should they go out, unless they come up with a clearly shameless act. And these are the limits prescribed by Allah. And whoever exceeds the limits prescribed by Allah wrongs his own self. You do not know (what will happen in future); it may be that Allah brings about a new situation thereafter. [1] **So, when they (the divorced women) have (almost) reached their term, then either retain them with fairness, or part with them with fairness. And make two just men from among you witnesses (of your either decision). And (O witnesses,) keep your testimony upright for the sake of Allah. That is what anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day is exhorted to do. And whoever fears Allah, for him Allah brings forth a way out,** [2] **and gives him provision (of his needs) from where he does not even imagine. And whoever places his trust in Allah, He is sufficient for him. Surely Allah is to accomplish His purpose. Allah has set a measure for every thing.** [3] **And those women from among you who have despaired of (further) menstruation, if you are in doubt, their *''iddah* is three months, as well as of those who have**

(1) *''iddah* means the waiting period prescribed for a divorced woman before she can marry another man. In the case of a divorcee, it is three periods of menstruation. The verse indicates that divorce should be given during *ṭuhr* (when the woman is not in her menstruation period), so that *''iddah* may start from her immediate menstruation period. Conversely, if she is divorced during menses, *''iddah* will start from the next menses period, and she will have to wait for long time before her *''iddah* may start. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

not yet menstruated. As for those having pregnancy, their term (of '*iddah*) is that they give birth to their child. And whoever fears Allah, He brings about ease for him in his affair. [4] This is the command of Allah that He has sent down to you. And whoever fears Allah, He will write off his evil deeds, and will give him a huge reward. [5] Provide them (the divorced women) residence from where you reside according to your means, and do not hurt them to straiten (life) for them. And if they are pregnant, spend on them till they give birth to their child. Then if they suckle the child for you, give them their fees, and consult each other (for determining the fee) with fairness, and if you have a deadlock between you, then another woman will suckle him. [6] A man of vast means should spend according to his vast means. And anyone whose sustenance is limited should spend from whatever Allah has given to him. Allah makes no one liable beyond what He has given to him. Allah will soon bring ease after a difficulty. [7]

Commentary

The Status of Marriage and Divorce in Sharī'ah: The Wise Legal Framework

In Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Volume [1], p 573, in Sūrah Al-Baqarah, full details of the subject under similar heading are given. The gist of the matter is that marriage and divorce in any given religion is not like a mutual transaction or contract similar to transactions in buying and selling or in loans and repayments, which the contracting parties may conclude as they wish. In all ages there has always been a consensus among followers of all religions that these contracts have a special sacred nature, far above ordinary contracts. Marriage and divorce must, of necessity, follow the sacred laws. The People of the Book, Jews and Christians, have a celestial religion and a heavenly book. Despite countless changes and distortions, they still retain the religious value of marriage, consider it sacrosanct and are unwilling to change its ceremonial rites. They maintain that traditional restrictions are binding. Idol-worshippers, who do not have any celestial book or religion, but do believe in the Supreme Being, like Hindus, Aryahs, Sikhs, Magi, Fire-worshippers and star-worshippers, all believe in the sacred nature of marriage and divorce and feel bound to fulfil their religious rites when

getting married. All family laws are based on these principles of the various religions.

Only the atheistic group, which rejects outright the existence of God or does not see the need for a religion, feel that marriage and divorce are like any other commercial transaction like 'hiring contract'. The purpose of marriage is no more than gratification of one's carnal desires. Alas, this theory seems to be gaining momentum throughout the world nowadays, which has made man to join the beastly queue. To Allah we belong and to Him we direct our complaint!

The sacred law of Islam is a complete and chaste system of life. Islam has not treated marriage as a civil contract only, but has endowed it with the status of a kind of worship. The institution thus not only allows the satisfaction of carnal desires of husband and wife in a chaste manner, with which they are naturally endued, but it also binds them in a wise and just system of mutual rights and obligations essential to the proper functioning of family life and solving the sociological problems like preserving the human race and upbringing of the children.

Since the proper functioning of human race depends on the proper maintenance of marital relationship, Islam has focused attention on family issues most exhaustively. By a careful analysis of the Holy Qur'ān we notice that commercial contracts like sale, partnership, hiring and so on are though among the most important socio-economic problems, the Holy Qur'ān has restricted itself to setting down their basic principles, and the bye-laws are rarely ever touched upon. In matters of marriage and divorce, on the other hand, not only the fundamental principles have been laid down, but their detailed laws have also been directly revealed by Allah in the Qur'ān and entrenched.

These laws have been scattered in various Chapters, and Sūrah An-Nisā' deals with them more elaborately. The current Sūrah, known as Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭalāq, specifically deals with 'divorce', 'the period of '*iddah*' and so on. Thus, according to some narratives, this Sūrah is also called as Sūrah An-Nisā' Aṣ-Ṣughrā or the Short Sūrah An-Nisā' [Qurṭubī with reference to Bukhārī]

According to the drift of Islamic teachings, when a man and a woman contract marriage, it should establish a permanent relationship for the

whole lifetime. This will maintain stability of husband and wife in mundane, as well as, in religious affairs, and also in the up-bringing of the children born of this wedlock, so that their moral conduct is proper and upright. Therefore, Islam, at every step of the way, guides marriage partners to avoid bitterness in their marital relationship, and even if it does arise, utmost efforts are made to remove it and to patch up differences and reconcile. However, despite all these attempts, it is possible in some cases that there remains no way out for the welfare of the estranged parties except to terminate this relationship. Religions that do not allow divorce cause hardship for their followers when faced with such complicated situations and lead to serious consequences. For that reason, Islam has, like the laws of marriage, laid down principles and rules for divorce as well. However, it has at the same time declared to its followers the guiding principle that, out of all permissible acts, divorce is the most detested one in the sight of Allah. [narrated by Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه], meaning that people should avoid it as far as possible. They should use this provision only as a last resort, only when they are compelled to do it. Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه has narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said تزوّجوا ولا تطلقوا فانّ الطّلاق يهتزّ منه عرش الرّحمٰن (Marry; do not divorce because divorce causes the Throne of the All-Merciful to shudder.) Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā Ash'arī رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Do not divorce women without their committing the evil act, because Allah does not love men who merely wish to experience the taste of sex, nor does He love women who merely wish to experience the taste of sex ." [Qurṭubī vide Tha'labī]

Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Allah has created nothing on the face of the earth dearer to Him than emancipation of slaves, and Allah has created nothing on the face of the earth more hateful to Him than divorce." [Qurṭubī]

Nevertheless, Islam has though discouraged divorce and has advised its followers to avoid it as far as possible, it has allowed it in cases of necessity under special rules and regulations which require that if termination of marital relationship becomes necessary, it should be done in a fair and dignified manner. Divorce should not be taken as a means of satisfying anger and revenge.

This Sūrah opens with the vocative expression يٰأَيُّهَا النَّبِىُّ (O Prophet),

which, according to Imām Qurṭubī, is generally used where the rule declared after that is intended to apply to the entire body of the believers. Where the injunction is exclusively meant for the person of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he is addressed as يَاَيُّهَا الرَّسُوْلُ (O Messenger).

In this context, the vocative expression يَاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ *Yā-ayyuhan-Nabiyu* is singular and as such it required that the verb should be singular as well to comply with the Arabic grammatical rule of concordance, but we notice that the verb used is the second person plural thus اِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَآءَ (O prophet, when *you people* divorce women)

In terms of literary usage and rules of eloquence, there are two types of plural: plural of number and honorific plural. Plural of number applies to three or more persons, but often the plural may refer to one person only, in which case it expresses respect or honour and is called honorific plural . In the light of this rule, the plural verb addresses the 'prophet' directly as a mark of respect and honour, and at the same time it indicates that the injunction is not restricted to him exclusively, but it applies to the entire body of believers.

Some scholars, however, are of the view that a sentence is understood here in the following way: يَاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَآءَ which means: O prophet, say to the believers that when they divorce their wives, they should observe the following procedure'.

Then the verse has laid down some rules relating to divorce as follows:

Rule [1]

فَطَلِّقُوْهُنَّ لِعِدَّتِهِنَّ (...divorce them at a time when the period of "*iddah* may start.[1]' Literally the word ['*iddah* means to 'count' and in the terminology of Sharī'ah the term "*iddah* means the waiting period prescribed for a divorced woman before she can marry another man. There are two ways in which a woman's marriage may be terminated. [1] When her husband dies, in which case the period of waiting is four months and ten days. [2] Her marriage ends when the husband divorces her. In the case of a divorcee that is not pregnant, "*iddah* is three periods of menstruation according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and other leading authorities. According to Imām Shafi'i and other scholars, the waiting period for a divorcee is three tuhrs (i.e. three periods of purity after menses). However, there are no days or months fixed for her. Whenever

her three menstrual cycles or clean cycles complete, her waiting period of divorce will be over. Women who do not menstruate, because they have not yet attained puberty, or because they have attained menopausal age, rule about them is forthcoming. Likewise, the rule for pregnant women is also forthcoming, in which case the waiting period for death and divorce is the same. The verse indicates that divorce should be given during *tuhr* (when woman is not in her menstruation period), so that '*iddah* may start from her immediate menstruation period. Conversely, if she is divorced during menses, '*iddah* will start from the next menses period, and she will have to wait for a longer time before her '*iddah* may start.

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Muslim record that Sayyidna Ibn 'Umar ﷺ divorced his wife while she was menstruating. When Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ mentioned this to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he became very indignant and said:

ليراجعها ثم يمسكها حتّٰى تطهر ثم تحيض فتطهر، فان بدا له فليطلقها طاهرًا قبل ان يمسّها، فتلك العدّة الّتى امرها اللّٰه تعَالٰى ان يطلّق بها النّساء.

"He must take her back and keep her till she is purified, then has another menstrual cycle and is purified. If it then seems proper for him to pronounce another divorce to her, he may do so when she is pure from the menstrual discharge before having conjugal relations with her, for that is the 'iddah that Allah has commanded for the divorce of women." [Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī and Muslim as quoted by Maẓharī].

This Ḥadīth clarifies several points. [1] It is forbidden to divorce a woman while she is menstruating. [2] If a person does this, it is necessary for him to retract the divorce, provided that it is revocable as was in the case of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ. [3] If a husband wishes to divorce his wife during the clean-period, he must not have had conjugal relations with her. And [4] this is the interpretation of verse [1] of this Sūrah: فَطَلِّقُوْهُنَّ لِعِدَّتِهِنَّ.

From what is cited above the meaning of the verse is explained, in that if a husband wishes to pronounce divorce on his wife, he must do so before her waiting period can commence. Since, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, the waiting period will start with the menstrual cycle that follows the divorce, the meaning of the verse would be that in the clean period in which divorce is intended to be pronounced, no intercourse

should take place, and that it should be pronounced towards the last part of the clean period before the start of the menstrual cycle. But since according to Imām Shāfi'ī, the waiting-period starts with the clean-period, the phrase لِقُبُلِ عِدَّتِهِنَّ (before their waiting-period) implies: 'Divorce them at the start of the clean-period'. This difference of opinion hinges on the differential interpretation of the word *qurū'* occurring in verse ثَلٰثَةَ قُرُوْءٍ [228] of Sūrah Baqarah. The details are available in Volume [1] of Ma'āriful Qur'ān under [2:228]

In sum: The first rule as derived from the verse under comment is that, according to unanimity of the Ummah, it is forbidden to pronounce divorce during the monthly courses. It should be pronounced in the interval between two monthly courses during which the husband and wife should not have had sexual intercourse. If they had intercourse during the interval, it is forbidden to pronounce the divorce. The reason for the prohibition in both cases is that the waiting-period of the wife will be unnecessarily prolonged and will cause her undue hardship. If she is divorced during her monthly course, it will not be counted. She will have to complete her days of menstruation and, according to the Ḥanafī school, the next clean-period or interval will not be counted either. When the second monthly course commences, her *'iddah* will start. This will obviously lengthen her period greatly. According to the Shāfi'ī school, at least the rest of the menstrual days, which passed before the waiting-period, will be increased.

This very first rule about divorce ensures that divorce is not a source of satisfying a fit of anger or revenge. It is rather an arrangement adopted as a last resort for the comfort of both the parties. It is necessary, therefore, to keep in mind from the very outset that the wife should not be unduly harmed by prolonging her waiting period.

This procedure applies in the case of the women whose *'iddah* is calculated by menstrual cycles or clean cycles. It does not apply to women for whom waiting-period is not compulsory, as in the case of a woman who did not have privacy with her husband. If a man and a woman got married but they did not get together in privacy, *'iddah* is not necessary for her at all when she is divorced. Therefore, it is permissible to divorce such women during their monthly courses. Likewise, *'iddah* for a woman who does not menstruate on account of minority of age, or because she

has attained menopausal age, is computed on monthly basis. Their "*iddah* is three months. Their menstrual or pure cycles are not taken into account. It is permissible to divorce them in any state, and even after having intercourse with them, as the forthcoming verses will clarify. [[Maẓharī] paraphrased]

Rule [2]

وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ (And count the period of "*iddah*...1) The word *Iḥsā'* means 'to count'. The verse purports to say that the believers, men and women, should keep a careful count of the passing days of the waiting period, lest they forget the exact days and feel, before time, that the waiting-period is over. The responsibility of keeping count of the days has been imposed on both men and women, although only masculine form has been used here. Generally, when the Qur'ān imposes injunctions on men and women, it uses the masculine form but it includes women as well. Another reason for using masculine gender here may be that women are generally more heedless, and therefore, the responsibility has been put directly on the shoulders of men.

Rule [3]

لَاتُخْرِجُوْهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوْتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ (Do not expel them from their houses, nor should they go out...65:1). The construction in this verse contains the phrase بُيُوْتِهِنَّ 'their houses', and implies that, so far as the residence of divorced women is due on men, they have a rightful claim in the home of their former husbands. Letting them reside there is no favour to them, but it is one of the basic rights of a wife that has been imposed upon the husband as an obligation. This verse shows that this right of hers does not end with divorce, but continues till the completion of waiting-period. Expelling a woman from her house before the completion of the waiting-period is unjust and forbidden. Likewise, it is forbidden for women to leave their houses on their own, even though the husband may permit her to leave, because spending the waiting-period in their houses is not only the husband's right, but also the Divine right, in that Allah has imposed on a woman in her period of "*iddah*. This is the rule according to the Ḥanafī school.

Rule [4]

إِلَّا أَنْ يَّأْتِيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ (...unless they come up with a clearly shameless act...65:1). It is forbidden to expel divorcees from their homes when they

are passing their period of 'iddah. However, an exception is made in this part of the verse. The exception applies to a situation when they come up with a clearly shameless act, in which case they may be expelled. What is meant by 'a clearly shameless act'? There are three views regarding this question:

The first view is that 'leaving husband's home on her own' is in itself an act of committing an outright indecency. In this interpretation, the 'exception' is not meant as a real exception. It does not purport to allow women to leave the homes, but to emphasise its prohibition with greater force. Its example is as follows: 'None shall do such-and-such certain work "unless" he has lost his human quality', or 'Do not use obscene language against your mother "unless" you wish to become out-and-out disobedient to your mother'. The first example of 'exception' does not purport to legalise the act, nor does the second example purport to legitimise it. Both examples eloquently emphasise prohibition of the acts. In brief, the injunction in the verse sets down that divorcees are not permitted to leave their husband's homes, unless they have reached the ultimate point of indecency and run away. Thus it does not allow to run away, but stresses its shamelessness and confirms its prohibition. This interpretation of 'clearly shameless act' is ascribed to Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar ﵁, Suddī, Ibn-us-Sā'ib, an-Nakha'ī and others. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has also preferred this interpretation. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

The second interpretation of the phrase فَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ 'a clearly shameless act' is that it refers to 'adultery' in which case the use of 'exception' would be in its normal sense. If a divorced woman commits adultery and it is proved that she is guilty of the crime, she will have to be taken away from her home to implement the prescribed punishment of adultery. This interpretation is attributed to Qatādah, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sha'bī, Zaid Ibn Aslam, Ḍaḥḥāk, 'Ikrimah and others. Imām Abū Yūsuf has preferred this interpretation.

The third view about the phrase 'a clearly shameless act' is that it refers to the 'use of abusive language' or 'quarreling'. The sense is that if the woman uses abusive language or is quarrelsome, it is permissible to evict her from her home of 'iddah . This interpretation of the phrase is ascribed to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵁ on the authority of several chains of transmitters. According to Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd ﵁ and Ubayy

Ibn Ka'b ﷺ, the exceptive phrase is read thus إِلَّا أَنْ يَفْحَشْ. The apparent meaning of this reading is ' indecent speech'. This reading confirms the third interpretation. [Rūḥ] In this case as well, the 'exception' is employed in its primary sense - in that if a divorced woman is obscene in words and actions, she can be evicted from her home of waiting-period.

Thus far four rules of divorcing procedure have been set down. More rules are forthcoming, but between them there are a few sentences to stress upon the strict adherence to these rules and to exhort people to carefully refrain from their violation. It is a unique style of the Qur'ān that after every command or injunction, its violation is prevented by instilling Allah's awful reverence in the hearts, and by invoking concern about the Hereafter. Especially the relationship between husband and wife is so delicate that their mutual rights cannot be fulfilled merely by legislation. The only thing that can prevent spouses from violation of the rules is the fear of Allah and the Hereafter.

وَتِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يَّتَعَدَّ حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهٗ ۗ لَا تَدْرِىْ لَعَلَّ اللّٰهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ اَمْرًا

(And these are the limits prescribed by Allah. And whoever exceeds the limits prescribed by Allah wrongs his own self. You do not know [what will happen in future]; it may be that Allah brings about a new situation thereafter...65:1)

The phrase حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ (the limits prescribed by Allah) refers to the sacred laws set down by the Sharī'ah of Islam. The phrase وَمَنْ يَّتَعَدَّ (And whoever exceeds the limits prescribed by Allah) implies 'whoever violates the sacred laws'. The phrase فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهٗ (wrongs his own self) implies that he has not damaged Allah's sacred laws or the Sharī'ah. In fact, he has caused loss to himself. The loss could be religious, or it could be mundane. The religious loss means that he has sinned by violating the sacred laws, in consequence of which he will suffer in the Hereafter. The mundane loss means that any person who pronounces divorce in violation of the rules prescribed by the Sharī'ah will most probably end up with three pronouncements of divorce, after which it cannot be revoked and even a fresh marriage is not possible. Such a person regrets bitterly and suffers tremendous hardship in this very world, especially if he has children. Many people divorce their wives with the intention of causing harm to them. It may cause some harm to the wives, but such cruel husbands will

be liable to double punishment: firstly for breaking the sacred laws of Allah, and secondly for the cruelty exercised against women. Such a situation has been so eloquently versified by a Persian poet:

پنداشت ستمگر جفا برما کرد......برگردن وے بماند وبرما بگذشت

> The oppressor thinks that he has caused misery for us
>
> However our misery comes to an end, but the liability of punishment remains stuck with the neck of the oppressor for good.

لَاتَدْرِیْ لَعَلَّ اللّٰہَ یُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذٰلِکَ اَمْرًا (You do not know; it may be that Allah brings about a new situation thereafter....65:1). These words signify that after estranged relations between the espouses, Allah may create a situation where the husband may recall the comforts he enjoyed in her wife's company, and realise the services offered by her in taking care of children and the home. On realising this, He may be remorseful on what he did, retract the divorce and retain her as his wife. This is possible only if at the time of divorcing the limits prescribed by the Sharī'ah is kept in view and instead of making the divorce *bā'in*, a revocable divorce is pronounced, in which case the husband has the right to retract it and retain the wife. Irrevocable divorce should not be resorted to unnecessarily because it terminates the marriage at once. Nor should three divorces should be pronounced, because after the third pronouncement, the husband does not have the right to retract, nor is it possible to renew the marriage contract, even if the divorced parties agree mutually.

Rule [5]

فَاِذَا بَلَغْنَ اَجَلَھُنَّ فَاَمْسِکُوْھُنَّ بِمَعْرُوْفٍ اَوْفَارِقُوْھُنَّ بِمَعْرُوْفٍ (So, when they [the divorced women] have [almost] reached their term, then either retain them with fairness, or part with them with fairness...65:2). The word *ajal* means 'term of '*iddah*' and 'reaching the term' means 'nearing the end of the '*iddah*'. The fifth rule laid down by this verse is that when a divorced woman's term of '*iddah*' is approaching the end, the time has almost come for the absolute termination of the marriage. By now the temporary impulse or momentary fit of anger should have dissipated, and it is the time to make the major decision with a cool and calm head whether it is better to retain the wife, or to terminate the marriage with her finally. If

the decision is to retain the wife, then she should be retained in all fairness with dignity and courtesy, the *masnūn* procedure of which is indicated in the forthcoming verse and in Prophetic Traditions: utter verbally that 'I have revoked the divorce I pronounced to you' and call two upright men as witnesses. If, however, the decision is to end the marriage, the woman should be released with fairness, dignity and courtesy. That is, the ''*iddah*' should be allowed to expire, and once it expires, she is free to contract marriage with someone else.

Rule [6]

At the end of term, whether it is decided to retain the wife or release her, the Qur'ān has restricted either of the decisions with the word *ma'rūf*. Literally, the word *ma'rūf* means 'a recognised way' and it implies that the Muslims are required to implement the approved procedure of Sharī'ah and Sunnah, as recognised by Islam. If the decision is to revoke the divorce and retain the wife, she should not be hurt in future verbally or physically, nor should this be shown as a favour to her. The husband should resolve to bear her weakness that led to divorce in the past, so that it may not cause bitterness to arise again. If, on the other hand, the decision is to release her, then the recognised procedure is as follows: Do not evict her in disrespectful manner, but release her in a courteous manner. When she is made to leave the house, it is at least *mustaḥab* [rewardable] in some cases to give her a suit of clothes, and in other cases it is *wājib* [compulsory] to do so, as other verses of the Qur'ān show. The details are available in books of jurisprudence.

Rule [7]

The seventh rule is derived directly from the above verse that gives the husband two options of retaining the wife or parting with her in fairness, and also indirectly from the preceding verse that says لَعَلَّ اللّٰهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ اَمْرًا "...it may be that Allah brings about a new situation thereafter." Both these verses indicate that if the husband is forced into a situation of divorcing, it is the divine will that he should keep the option of revoking the divorce open. The approved method of divorce is that he should pronounce the divorce only once in express or clear words. The pronouncement of divorce should not contain any word or phrase expressive of anger that might denote absolute termination of marriage tie, as for instance he might say 'Get out of my house', or say 'I pronounce

severe divorce on you', or say 'No relationship exists between me and you'. When such expressions are uttered as part of the pronouncement of express divorce, or these expressions are uttered with the intention of divorce, the divorce becomes effective at once, and he loses the right of revocation. This in the terminology of Sharī'ah is known as *Ṭalāq Bā'in* or irrevocable divorce. Even worse situation is when the husband pronounces three divorces upon his wife after which the husband not only loses his right of revocation, but they [husband and wife] also lose their right to enter into a fresh marriage, even if they mutually agree as we have seen in Sūrah Al-Baqarah: فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ (Thereafter, if he divorces her, she shall no longer remain lawful for him unless she marries a man other than him. [2:230]

Three Simultaneous Divorces: Unlawful but Effective

Nowadays, total indifference to religion and heedlessness of its injunctions is widespread, in the society. Not only the illiterate and ignoramus, but also the literate people, like pleaders think that a divorce pronounced or written less than three times is no divorce at all. It is noticed daily that people who pronounce three simultaneous divorces regret bitterly and are in search of legal loopholes, so that they do not lose their wives.

Imām Nasā'ī reports, on the authority of Sayyidnā Maḥmūd Ibn Labīd ﷺ, in an authentic Tradition that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was informed about a person who had pronounced three divorces on the spur of the moment to his wife. The Holy Prophet ﷺ having heard this became angry. Therefore, pronouncing three divorces simultaneously, by consensus of the Ummah, is prohibited. Even if a person pronounces three divorces separately in three different clean periods, that too is reprehensible, by consensus of the Ummah. Qur'ānic verses themselves confirm this by indication. The only disagreement lies in whether or not this procedure of divorce is as prohibited and counted as *bid'ah* as divorcing three times simultaneously. Imām Mālik holds this procedure as prohibited. Imāms Abū Ḥanīfah and Shāfi'ī do not view it as prohibited or as *bid'ah*. In fact, they view it as an approved [*sunnah*] procedure of divorce, but an abominable act nonetheless. Please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. [1], PP 578-590 for detailed injunctions regarding three simultaneous divorces.

But just as the Ummah holds by consensus that pronouncing three divorces simultaneously is prohibited, it is also a point of consensus among the entire Ummah that despite being prohibited, if a person pronounces three simultaneous divorces, all the three divorces become effective, and fresh marriage between them, in future, would not be possible. The only people that disagree with the consensus of the four major schools are some of the followers of the *Ah-ul-Ḥadīth* group and the *Shī'ite* group. The four major schools argue that if something is abominable or unlawful, it does not necessarily imply that its legal consequences will not follow. For instance, if a person kills an innocent victim, the latter would die as a result of killing, despite the act of killing being unlawful. Likewise, despite three simultaneous divorces being unlawful, they necessarily take effect. On this issue, not only the four major schools agree unanimously, but there is also overwhelming consensus of the noble Companions. Please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. [1], PP 586-590 for a detailed discussion on the action taken by Sayyidnā 'Umar Al-Fārūq ﷺ on the issue of three simultaneous divorces.

Rule [8]

وَاَشْهِدُوْا ذَوَىْ عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَاَقِيْمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلّٰهِ (And make two just men from among you witnesses [of your either decision]. And (O witnesses,) keep your testimony upright for the sake of Allah...65:2) This verse purports to say that towards the end of the period of '*iddah*, when a decision is made either to revoke the divorce and retain the wife, or to release her, it is commendable in both cases to call two upright persons to witness the decision. This procedure of having two witnesses is, according to most jurists, a commendable (*mustaḥabb*) practice, and not mandatory. Therefore, revocation of divorce is not contingent upon appointment of witnesses. The underlying wisdom of such appointment is to resolve the possible dispute that may arise later. In case the husband decides to revoke the divorce, it is possible that the wife may deny it, whereupon the witnesses may prove revocation. And in case he decides termination of marriage, a conflict can still arise where the husband himself may make mischief and, being overcome by the wife's love, claim that he had revoked the divorce before the expiration of '*iddah*. The witnesses then may prove that he had decided to release the wife.

The adjectival phrase ذَوَىْ عَدْلٍ (...two just men) refers to reliable

witnesses in terms of Sharī'ah. If the witnesses are not reliable in terms of Sharī'ah, that is, if they are not morally upright, pious and truthful, the Qāḍī would not be able to pass judgement on the basis of such unreliable, impious and untruthful witnesses.

اَقِيْمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلّٰهِ (...keep your testimony upright for the sake of Allah...65:2) The verse addresses all Muslims in general that should they be required by a court to bear witness in a disputed case of revocation of divorce or complete termination of marriage, they should be unbiased in their testimony.

ذٰلِكُمْ يُوْعَظُ بِهٖ مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ (That is what anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day is exhorted to do...65:2) This verse particularly mentions the Hereafter because the mutual rights and obligations of husband and wife cannot be fulfilled without God-consciousness and the thought of the Hereafter.

The Wise and Educative style of the Qur'ān in the laws of Crime and Punishment

The system of punishment for crimes and compiling their laws is in place among the states of the world since ancient times. Obviously, the Qur'ān is also the Book that explains the divine laws, but its style is unique. Before and after every piece of law, man is made conscious of Allah and the Hereafter, so that he may follow the law, not for fear of police or inspector or, but for fear of Allah, irrespective of whether anyone else sees him, not. In all situations, whether in private or in public, he finds the laws binding. This is the reason why even the harshest law was not difficult to implement among those who have proper faith in the Qur'ān. There was no need for a network of police and its special or secret services.

This unique Qur'ānic style is used in all laws, but it has been especially applied to the laws relating to the marital relations and their mutual rights and obligations, because due to the delicate nature of these relations, it is not possible to secure evidence for every shortcoming on either side, nor is it possible for the judicial system to investigate and estimate the full extent of the shortcomings in the relationship. Proper fulfilment of mutual rights depends only on the inner qualities of the couple and their actions and deeds. Therefore, the *Masnūn Khuṭbah* or

approved sermon that is recited at marriage contains three verses of the Qur'ān, and each one of them begins with laying stress on *taqwā* and ends with laying stress on *taqwā* to indicate that the marrying parties must appreciate that Allah is fully aware of all their covert and overt actions, whether or not they are seen by someone else. Rather, He is well-aware of the innermost thoughts hidden in their minds or hearts. If they fall short of fulfilling the mutual rights and obligations or hurt each other, they will be answerable to the knower of secrets. In the same strain, a few injunctions have been laid down in Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭalāq. Immediately after the first injunction the believers are exhorted: وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ رَبَّكُمْ ('And fear Allah, your Lord') After this exhortation, four more injunctions are set down and then they are admonished that anyone who oversteps Allah's limits will be wronging himself and will have to bear the disastrous consequences, thus 'وَمَنْ يَّتَعَدَّ حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَه Four more indirect injunctions are set down after that, and the admonition is repeated, thus: ذٰلِكُمْ يُوْعَظُ بِهٖ مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ('That is what anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day is exhorted to do...65:2) Followed by this is a verse in which the merits of *taqwā* are mentioned, describing its religious and mundane blessings and benefits. Towards the end of the same verse the blessings and benefits of trust in Allah have been described. Thereafter, a few more injunctions pertaining to waiting-period are set down. Then in two more verses additional benefits and blessings of *taqwā* are described. This is followed by injunctions pertaining to marriage, divorce, the wife's maintenance, children's fosterage and so on. In the course of all these injunctions, the mention of the Hereafter, the virtue of *taqwā* , and the blessings of trust in Allah are interspersed repeatedly. This Qur'ānic style of alternating injunctions with the virtues of *taqwā* apparently seems disjointed, but having grasped the wisdom of the prudent style of the Qur'ān, the close linkage becomes clear.

Now have a look at the interpretation of the foregoing verses:

وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مَخْرَجًا وَّيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ (And whoever fears Allah, for him Allah brings forth a way out, and gives him provision (of his needs) from where he does not even imagine...2/3) The word *taqwā* primarily and literally means 'to guard' or 'to refrain'. In Islamic terminology it signifies 'to guard against sins'. When the word is related to Allah, it is translated as 'to fear Allah' and implies 'to avoid disobedience of Allah and

guard against sins'.

There are two benefits of تقوٰی *taqwā* mentioned in this verse: [1] By exercising *taqwā* , Allah creates a way out to guard oneself . The question is 'Guard against what?' The correct answer is that it is general, 'against all mundane difficulties and hardships as well as all hardships and difficulties of the Hereafter' and the verse implies that for a God-fearing person Allah paves the way to salvage him from the difficulties and hardships of this world as well as from the horrors of the next world. [2] By exercising *taqwā*, Allah will provide for the God-fearing person *rizq* [literally 'provision'] from where he does not expect. The *rizq* in this context refers to anything one needs, whether any mundane need or any need of the Hereafter. Allah has promised the righteous believers in this verse that He will ease every difficulty of theirs and provide for them all their needs from resources they never expected or thought about. [Rūḥ]

In keeping with the present context, some of the commentators interpret the verse thus: The divorcing husband or the divorced wife, both or whoever of them is God-fearing, Allah will give them salvation from the horrors of divorce or termination of marriage experienced at the time of its happening. In other words, the man will be given a compatible wife and the woman will be given a compatible husband. Obviously the primary meaning of the verse comprehends all kinds of adversities and needs, including the horrors and needs of the husband and wife. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

The Cause of Revelation of the Above Verse

Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ reports that 'Auf Ibn Mālik Ashja'ī ﷺ came up to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said that the enemies had arrested and kidnapped his son Sālim. His mother is very anxious and he wanted to know what he should do. The Holy Prophet ﷺ ordered him and his wife to recite لاحول ولا قوّة الاّ باللّٰه (There is no strength nor power but with Allah) abundantly. The husband and wife complied with the order. They recited the formula abundantly. It produced its desired effect. One day the enemies became unmindful, and the boy somehow managed to escape and drove a herd of goats that belonged to them to his father. According to other narratives, he found one of their camels and he mounted it and drove the other camels to his father. The father reported the incident to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Another narration has it that he enquired

from the Holy Prophet ﷺ whether the goats and camels the son brought with him were lawful for them. On that occasion, the verse وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ (And whoever fears Allah, for him Allah brings forth a way out, and gives him provision from where he does not even imagine...2/3)

According to other versions of the report, when Sayyidnā 'Auf Ibn Mālik Ashja'ī رضي الله عنه and his wife became very restless and anxious because of separation from the son, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised them to exercise *taqwā* and recite abundantly لاحول ولا قوّة إلّا بالله (There is no strength nor power but with Allah). [All these narratives are cited in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī from Ibn Mardūyah through the chain of al-Kalbī from Abī Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās]

This occasion of revelation indicates that this verse, though related to divorcing situation in this context, has general application for all circunstances.

Ruling

This Tradition proves that when a Muslim is captured by the non-believers, the captive takes their property and returns home, such a property would be treated as booty, and as such their use would be lawful. It is a general rule of spoils to give 1/5th [*khums*] to the public treasury, but in this case he is not obligated to give 1/5th [*khums*] to the public treasury, because in the narration reported above, the *khums* of the property was not exacted from them. The jurists have ruled that if a Muslim secretly goes away to the Domain of War without seeking permission from them, snatch their property and somehow bring it into the Domain of Islam, the above ruling will apply. However, if he officially sought permission to enter their territory [as it happens nowadays by obtaining a visa] and entered their country, then it is not permissible for him to take their property without their consent. Likewise, if a person is captured and taken into the non-Muslim territory, and a non-Muslim deposits with him an article for safe custody, it is not permissible for him to take it away to the Domain of Islam. In the first case, it is not permissible because by seeking official permission a pact is entered into between them, and he has no authority to dispose of their property without their prior consent. If he does, it would be a breach of the pact. In the second case, there is a practical pact with the depositor, in that whenever he demands his deposited article back, it should be returned.

Failure to return his deposited item is tantamount to breach of contract that is unlawful in Sharī'ah. [[Maẓharī]]

Before the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated, many non-believers used to keep their deposits with him. At the time of migration, he still had with him some of these deposits. As long as he was in Makkah, he kept them himself, but when he was migrating, he committed them to the care of Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ and did not take them with him to Madīnah. In fact, Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ was left behind for the sole reason of returning the deposits to the rightful people.

A Proven Prescription to avert calamities and achieve the objectives

According to the above Tradition, Sayyidnā 'Auf Ibn Mālik Ashja'ī ؓ and his wife were advised to recite لَاحَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ (There is no strength nor power but with Allah) abundantly to avert afflictions and obtain benefits. Mujaddid Alf Thānī رحمه الله تعالى says that abundant recitation of this formula is a proven prescription to avert all kinds of religious and mundane afflictions and to obtain all religious and mundane objectives and benefits. According to him, its proper way is to recite five hundred times لاحول ولا قوة الا بالله , and to recite Ṣalāh (*durūd*) one hundred times before, and one hundred times after the formula, and then to supplicate to Allah for one's need. [Tafsīr [Maẓharī]] Imām Aḥmad, Ḥākim [grading the chain as *ṣaḥīḥ*], Baihaqī, Abū Na'īm and others have transmitted on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr ؓ that one day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ continuously recited the verse وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهٗ مَخْرَجاً وَّيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَايَحْتَسِبُ ('And whoever fears Allah, for him Allah brings forth a way out, and gives him provision from where he does not even imagine...2/3) until the reporter started feeling sleepy. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: " Abū Dharr, if all people choose only this verse, it would be sufficient for them all." [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī] 'Sufficient' in this statement means it would be sufficient for all people to accomplish their religious and mundane objectives, if they practice it.

وَمَنْ يَّتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهٗ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بَالِغُ اَمْرِهٖ ۭ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا (...And whoever places his trust in Allah, He is sufficient for him. Surely Allah is to accomplish His purpose. Allah has set a measure for every thing....65:3) In this verse Allah promises those who put their trust in Him that He shall suffice for them against all odds, because Allah will execute His

decisions that He made for them, in whatever way He wills and chooses. Allah set a measure for all things. It is in accordance with this set measure that He decrees all acts. Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah record from Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

لو انّكم توكّلتم على الله حقّ توكّله لرزقكم كما يرزق الطّير تغدوا خماصًا وتروح بطانا.

> "If you trust in Allah as He ought to be trusted, He will provide for you in the same way as He provides for the birds. They leave their nests while hungry in the mornings, but come back in the evenings with their bellies full."

Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim transmit on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "Seventy-thousand of my followers will be admitted to Paradise without account." Among their other qualities, they will be characterised by having trust in Allah." [Maẓharī]

Tawakkul (Trust in Allah) does not mean to forsake the causes and means Allah has created for us to acquire things. One should utilise the means at our disposal. However, instead of relying solely on them, one should rather put his trust in Allah, in that no task shall be accomplished unless Allah wills it. After describing the virtues and blessings of *taqwā* and *Twakkul*, the next verses lay down some more rules about divorce and *"iddah*.

Rule [9]

وَالّٰٓـِٔيْ يَئِسْنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيْضِ مِنْ نِّسَآئِكُمْ اِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلٰثَةُ اَشْهُرٍ وَّالّٰٓـِٔيْ لَمْ يَحِضْنَ ۭ وَاُولَاتُ الْاَحْمَالِ اَجَلُهُنَّ اَنْ يَّضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ

> (And those women from among you who have despaired of [further] menstruation, if you are in doubt, their *"iddah* is three months, as well as of those who have not yet menstruated. As for those having pregnancy, their term [of *"iddah*] is that they give birth to their child...65:4)

This verse deals with additional rules pertaining to the waiting-period of divorced women. It subdivides divorced women and their waiting-periods into three different categories. Under normal circumstances, the waiting-period of a divorced woman is three menstrual cycles as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Baqarah. In the case of women who have stopped menstruating for good on account of advanced age, or due

to some disease etc. their "*iddah* is three months instead of three menstrual cycles. The same is the "*iddah* of young women who have not yet started menstruating on account of being under age. The "*iddah* for women who are pregnant at the time of divorce continues until they give birth to their child irrespective of the length of the period.

The words إِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ (if you are in doubt) refer to the doubt or confusion such women may have because the real "*iddah* is counted on the basis of menstruation, but these women's menstruation has ceased, so they are doubtful about how to count their "*iddah*.

وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِهٖ يُسْرًا (And whoever fears Allah, He brings about ease for him in his affair....65:4) The verse further speaks of the virtues and blessings of *taqwā* in that whoever has *taqwā*, Allah will make matters easy for him in this world as well as in the next world. Then the verse emphasises strict adherence to the above laws pertaining to divorce and waiting-period, thus: ذٰلِكَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ اَنْزَلَهٗ اِلَيْكُمْ (This is the command of Allah that He has sent down to you...5) After this, the verse again draws attention to another virtue of *taqwā*. وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّاٰتِهٖ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهٗ اَجْرًا (And whoever fears Allah, He will write off his evil deeds, and will give him a huge reward...65:5)

Five Blessings of *taqwā*

The merits and blessings of *taqwā* mentioned in the above verses may be summarised in five things: [1] He who has *taqwā* will be given a way out of difficulties and adversities; [2] He will be provided with all his needs from resources that he does not anticipate or expect; [3] Allah will make matters and tasks easy for him; [4] Allah will expiate his sins; and [5] He will grant him an immense reward.

Another blessing of *taqwā* mentioned by the Holy Qur'ān at another place is that a God-fearing person finds it easier to distinguish between right and wrong, thus: اِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا (...if you fear Allah, He will provide you with a criterion to distinguish between right and wrong...8:29] The next verses deal with further rules about the waiting period and maintenance of the divorced women and their other rights.

اَسْكِنُوْهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِّنْ وُّجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَآرُّوْهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوْا عَلَيْهِنَّ (Provide to them [the divorced women] residence where you reside according to your means...65:6) This injunction is related to Rule [3] above which states that

divorced women must not be expelled from their homes. This verse states the positive aspect of the injunction, in that the husbands, according to their means, should let their divorced wives live in some portion of the residence where they themselves live. If the wife is given a revocable divorce, there is no need for any *ḥijāb* or veil. However, if she is given an irrevocable divorce, whether of minor degree [*bā'in*] or of major degree by pronouncing divorce thrice, then marriage tie stands broken. She is required to be in *ḥijāb* in the presence of her former husband. Therefore, the arrangement in the residence should be made in such a way that she lives in the same residence with full observance of the rules of *ḥijāb*.

Rule [10]: Do not Hurt Divorced Women during their *'iddah*

لَاتُضَآرُّوْهُنَّ (...and do not hurt them to straiten [life] for them...65:6) This verse sets down that all the possible needs of a divorced woman must not be harassed by taunts or by curtailing her needful things, so that she is compelled to leave the home.

Rule [11]: Maintenance of Divorcees during their *'iddah*

وَإِنْ كُنَّ أُولَاتِ حَمْلٍ فَأَنْفِقُوْا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتّٰى يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ (...And if they are pregnant, spend on them till they give birth to their child...65:6) This verse lays down the rule that if a divorcee is pregnant at the time of divorce, her maintenance is obligatory on the husband. On the basis of this verse, there is a complete consensus of the Ummah on this point. Similarly, if she is not pregnant, and the divorce given to her is revocable, her maintenance too is compulsory on the husband till the expiry of her *'iddah*. This point too is agreed upon by all the jurists of the Ummah. However, if a wife is given irrevocable divorce, whether a *bā'in* divorce or the divorce pronounced three times, or if a woman has got her marriage terminated by way of *khul'* [got herself separated from the husband for a compensation], will not have to be maintained by the husband according to Imāms Shāfi'i, Aḥmad and others. However, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, her maintenance is also incumbent upon the husband. He argues that just as she is entitled to residence during the term of *'iddah* as is provided in verse 6, she is entitled to sustenance too. The husbands are obligated to provide them with these necessities of life during *'iddah*. This is further supported by those Traditions in which it has been reported that when Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ heard the report of Fāṭimah bint Qais who claimed that her husband was not obligated to maintain her

after divorce, he said: "We cannot abandon the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, on the basis of this narration. [Muslim]

'The Book of Allah' apparently refers to this verse (6). According to Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ, the verse includes maintenance. 'Sunnah' refers to the Tradition reported by Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ himself and transmitted by Ṭaḥāwī, Darquṭnī and Ṭabarānī. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ reports that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say that women divorced by three pronouncements are also entitled to maintenance and lodging.

The details are available in Tafsīr [Maẓharī].

Rule [12]: Fees for Suckling the Child

فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ (...Then if they suckle the child for you, give them their fees...65:6). In other words, divorcees who are pregnant, their term of *'iddah* ends with the birth of the child. Consequently, their maintenance is not incumbent upon the husband. However, if they are suckling the baby, it is permissible for the mother to claim a fee for suckling the baby from her former husband, and it is incumbent on him to pay it to her, if she claims it. The principle is that as long as the marriage between the parents of the baby is intact, it is the responsibility of the mothers to suckle the children as the Qur'ān states وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ (And the mothers suckle their children...2:233) One cannot receive a fee for an act that is obligatory on him or her, because it amounts to *rishwah* (bribery) which in itself is unlawful to give or take. The period of *'iddah* is akin to the marriage in this respect, because the husband is obligated to maintain her, and therefore she cannot claim a fee for suckling a child during this period too. But once she has delivered the baby, her term of *'iddah* is over and she is absolutely released from the tie of marriage. Consequently, it is not incumbent upon the former husband to maintain her. In this instance, if she suckles the baby, the verse under comment permits giving and taking a payment for the service.

Rule [13]

وَأْتَمِرُوا بَيْنَكُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ (...and consult each other [for determining the fee] with fairness...65:6) The word *I'timar* means 'to consult each other' and 'to accept each other's suggestion'. The verse directs the spouses to avoid any conflict in determining the fee for suckling. The divorced wife should not

demand more than the normal rate, nor should the former husband of the divorcee refuse to pay the normal fee. They are advised to settle the issue with mutual understanding and tolerance.

Rule/Injunction [14]

وَإِنْ تَعَاسَرْتُمْ فَسَتُرْضِعُ لَهُ أُخْرَىٰ (...And if you have a deadlock between you, then another woman will suckle him...65:6) In other words, if the husband and wife cannot agree on the fee of suckling with mutual consent, or the wife refuses to suckle the child even for a remuneration, then the mother cannot be forced by a court for the service of suckling. Normally, the mother has the most compassion for the child. Despite this, if she is refusing to suckle him, she probably has a genuine reason for that. If she has no genuine reason, and she is refusing merely on account of anger and displeasure, she is a sinner in the sight of Allah, but an Islamic court cannot force her to do the suckling. Likewise, if the husband, on account of abject poverty, is unable to pay the fee for suckling and a wet-nurse is willing to suckle the child without remuneration or for a lesser fee than what the divorcee mother is demanding, he cannot be forced to agree to the demand of the mother and get her to do the suckling. In fact, in either of the cases it is possible to have the child suckled by the wet-nurse. However, if the fee the mother is demanding is the same as the wet-nurse's remuneration, preference would be given to the mother rather than the wet-nurse. This is a point of consensus between all the Muslim jurists.

Ruling

If it is agreed that the wet-nurse would do the suckling, it is incumbent that the wet-nurse should do the suckling while the child is in the custody of the mother. It is not lawful to separate the mother and the baby, because the custody of the child is the right of the mother according to the law of Ḥiḍānah as stated in the authentic Traditions. It is not permissible to usurp this right from her. [Tafsīr [Maẓharī]].

Rule [15]: Quantum of Divorcee's Maintenance

لِيُنْفِقْ ذُوْ سَعَةٍ مِّنْ سَعَتِهٖ ؕ وَمَنْ قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهٗ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّآ اٰتٰهُ اللّٰهُ (A man of vast means should spend according to his vast means. And anyone whose sustenance is limited should spend from whatever Allah has given to him...65:7) In other words, in determining the quantum of the divorced wife's maintenance the financial position of the husband will be taken into

account. If the husband is wealthy, he should spend on his divorcee according to his affluence; and if he is indigent, he should spend according to his limited resources - even if the wife is wealthy. This is the ruling of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. Other schools of jurisprudence hold differing views. [Tafsīr [Maẓharī]]

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا مَآ اٰتٰهَا ۭ سَيَجْعَلُ اللّٰهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُّسْرًا (Allah makes no one liable beyond what He has given to him. Allah will soon bring ease after a difficulty....65:7) This is an elaboration of the preceding statement, in that Allah does not demand from anyone more than what he can afford. Therefore, if the husband is indigent, it is incumbent upon him to provide for her according to his level of indigence at that time. The wife, on the other hand, is advised to be content, for the time being, with the amount of sustenance her indigent husband is able to provide. She should not think that the present state of indigence will last for all times to come, because ease and difficulty are in the hands of Allah, and as such He can change indigence into affluence.

Special Note

The verse under comment bears an indication that Allah will create a condition of ease for husbands who try to provide for their wives the obligatory amount of sustenance to the best of their ability, and are not in the habit of keeping their wives under straitened circumstances. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī] And Allah knows best!

Verses 8 - 12

وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ عَتَتْ عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهٖ فَحَاسَبْنٰهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيْدًا وَّعَذَّبْنٰهَا عَذَابًا نُّكْرًا ﴿٨﴾ فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ اَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ اَمْرِهَا خُسْرًا ﴿٩﴾ اَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ۙ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ يٰٓاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ۚ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۚ قَدْ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ اِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا ﴿١٠﴾ رَّسُوْلًا يَّتْلُوْا عَلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ مُبَيِّنٰتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّؤْمِنْۢ بِاللّٰهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُّدْخِلْهُ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ۭ قَدْ اَحْسَنَ اللّٰهُ

لَهٗ رِزْقًا ﴿۱۱﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ وَّمِنَ الْاَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ ۭ
يَتَنَزَّلُ الْاَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۙ وَّاَنَّ اللّٰهَ
قَدْ اَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ﴿۱۲﴾

And how many a township rebelled against the command of their Lord, and against His messengers, so We called them to a severe account, and punished them with an evil punishment. [8] **Thus they tasted the evil consequence of their acts, and the end of their conduct was loss.** [9] **Allah has prepared for them a severe punishment; so fear Allah O men of understanding who have believed! Allah has sent down to you a Reminder,** [10] **a messenger who recites to you the verses of Allah, making (the truth) clear, so that He may bring forth those who believe and do righteous deeds from the layers of darkness into the light. And whoever believes in Allah, and acts righteously, He will admit him to the gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein such people will live forever. Allah has made for him a good provision.** [11] **Allah is the One who has created seven skies, and their like from earth. The Command descends among them, so that you may know that Allah is powerful over every thing, and that Allah has encompassed every thing in knowledge.** [12]

Commentary

فَحَاسَبْنٰهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيْدًا وَّعَذَّبْنٰهَا عَذَابًا نُّكْرًا (so We called them to a severe account, and punished them with an evil punishment...65:8). The severe account and evil punishment of nations mentioned in this verse refers to what will happen in the Hereafter. However, the past tense has been employed presumably to indicate the occurrence of these events is as certain as if it has already been materialised. [Rūḥ]. The other possibility is that the *Ḥisāb* or 'account' in this context does not refer to interrogation, but to the determination of punishment, (in which case it may refer to the punishment faced by the infidels right here in this world.) Another possibility is that the 'severe account' will though take place in the Hereafter, it has already been recorded and is being recorded on daily basis in the ledger of deeds and is therefore described as 'called them to a severe account'. In this interpretation, the 'punishment' refers to the past nations who were destroyed by Divine punishment in this world because

they defied Allah's and His Messengers' commandments. In this case, only the next statement اَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا (Allah has prepared for them a severe punishment...10) would refer to the terrible punishment of the Hereafter.

قَدْ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ اِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا. رَّسُوْلًا (Allah has sent down to you a Reminder, a messenger...65:10-11). The verb *arsala* 'sent' needs to be understood preceding the object *rasūlan* 'a messenger' which appears at the commencement of verse [11]. The simplest way in which these verses can be interpreted is to translate them thus: 'Allah has sent down to you a Reminder, (the Qur'ān and He has also sent to you) a messenger...65:11) Other commentators have preferred other interpretations. For instance some say that the word *dhikr* ('Reminder') refers to the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself, and the word 'messenger' is an explanatory complement to the word '*dhikr*', because abundance of his remembering Allah made him a personified Remembrance of Allah. [Rūḥ] [1]

Where are the Seven Earths and in What Form?

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ وَّمِنَ الْاَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ (Allah is the One who has created seven skies, and their like from earth...65:12). This verse indicates that there are seven earths as there are seven heavens, but the question is where these earths are and in what shape or form. Are they in the form of seven layers one above the other, or each earth is separate from the other. If they form layers one above the other, is there a distance between two earths, just as there is a distance between two heavens? Are there separate creatures living on each earth, just as separate types of angels are residing in every heaven? Is there air, wind, atmosphere and so forth on each earth? Or, are these layers of earth joined and compact with each other? The Qur'ān is silent on these questions. There are Traditions reported on these questions, but the leading authorities of Traditions disagree about their authenticity. Some scholars have authenticated them and others have graded them as 'fabricated'. Rationally all findings are possible, and none of our religious or mundane needs are dependent on resolving these issues, nor will we be questioned about them in the grave

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[1] This explanation is based on the premise that '*dhikr*' in this verse means 'Allah's remembrance'. However, it also means 'reminder'. Taken in this sense, the word 'messenger' in the verse can be easily interpreted as an explanatory complement to the word '*dhikr*', because the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a 'Reminder' to the entire mankind. Our translation in the text is based on this connotation. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

or at Resurrection, so that we need to do research about the seven earths, their locale or their inhabitants. The safest position is to believe that there are seven earths as there are seven skies. Allah has created them with His Supreme Creative Power. Qur'ān has mentioned this much only. If the Qur'ān did not find it necessary to give a detailed account of it, there is no need for us to think about it or research it. This was the attitude of our pious predecessors. They formulated the following policy ابهموا ما ابهمه الله "Leave unexplained what Allah has left unexplained" as long as it does not contain any injunction for us to follow, nor does it concern our religious or mundane need. This commentary has been written for the common readers. Purely academic issues have not been included here which might not be needed for them.

يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ (The Command descend among them...65:12) The verse purports to say that Divine commands and decrees are revealed and work in the seven heavens and in the seven earths. The Divine commands or decrees operate in two ways: [1] *Tashrīʻī*; and [2] *Takwīnī*. *Tashrīʻī* command refers to laws Divinely prescribed for people who are legally obligated to observe them. The Divinely legislated laws are revealed through the angels to the Prophets عليهم السلام to be passed on to the humans and *jinns*. These laws pertain to articles of faith, worship, good morals, transactions and way of living. Adherence to them attracts reward and flouting them entails punishment. *Takwīnī* laws pertain to the Divine decrees in connection with the creation of the universe or bringing it into existence from the realm of non-existence, its gradual growth and development, its phenomena of depletion and replenishment, and the phenomena of life and death. These decrees encompass the entire Divine creation. Therefore, if it be proved that between two earths there is atmosphere and distance, and that some kind of creatures inhabits it, even if that kind of creature is not legally bound by the Sharīʻah laws, the description يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ 'The Command descend among them...65:12) will still apply, because Allah's *Takwīnī* decrees encompass them as well. And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭalāq
Ends here

Sūrah At-Taḥrīm
(The Prohibiting)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 12 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَاۤ اَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ لَكَ ۚ تَبْتَغِيْ مَرْضَاتَ اَزْوَاجِكَ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١﴾ قَدْ فَرَضَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ تَحِلَّةَ اَيْمَانِكُمْ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ
مَوْلٰىكُمْ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢﴾ وَاِذْ اَسَرَّ النَّبِيُّ اِلٰى بَعْضِ
اَزْوَاجِهٖ حَدِيْثًا ۚ فَلَمَّا نَبَّاَتْ بِهٖ وَاَظْهَرَهُ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَّفَ بَعْضَهٗ
وَاَعْرَضَ عَنْۢ بَعْضٍ ۚ فَلَمَّا نَبَّاَهَا بِهٖ قَالَتْ مَنْ اَنْۢبَاَكَ هٰذَا ؕ قَالَ نَبَّاَنِيَ
الْعَلِيْمُ الْخَبِيْرُ ﴿٣﴾ اِنْ تَتُوْبَاۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمَا ۚ وَ اِنْ
تَظٰهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ مَوْلٰىهُ وَجِبْرِيْلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۚ
وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ ظَهِيْرٌ ﴿٤﴾ عَسٰى رَبُّهٗۤ اِنْ طَلَّقَكُنَّ اَنْ يُّبْدِلَهٗۤ
اَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِّنْكُنَّ مُسْلِمٰتٍ مُّؤْمِنٰتٍ قٰنِتٰتٍ تٰٓئِبٰتٍ عٰبِدٰتٍ سٰٓئِحٰتٍ
ثَيِّبٰتٍ وَّاَبْكَارًا ﴿٥﴾

O Holy Prophet, why do you ban (on your self) something that Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the pleasure of your wives? And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very Merciful. [1] Allah has prescribed (the way of) absolution from your oaths. And Allah is your protector, and He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

[2] **And (remember) when the Holy Prophet told one of his wives something in secret. So, when she disclosed it (to another wife), and Allah made it known to him, he told (the disclosing wife) part of it, and bypassed another part. So when he informed her about it, she said, "Who told you about this?" He said, "It is told to me by the All-Knowing, the All-Aware.** [3]

(O two wives of the Holy Prophet,) If both of you repent to Allah, then (your conduct calls for it, because) your hearts have diverted. And if you back each other against him (the Holy Prophet), then Allah is his supporter, and Jibrīl and righteous believers and, after all that, angels are his helpers. [4] **It is hoped that, if he divorces you, Allah will give him in your place wives better than you, submissive to Allah, believing, devout, penitent, steadfast in worship, fasting, previously married and virgins.** [5]

Commentary

Cause of Revelation

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and in other collection of Aḥādīth, on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﵂, that it was a daily practice of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to visit each of his wives after *'aṣr* prayer for a short time inquiring about their welfare. Once he visited Sayyidah Zainab ﵂ and spent more time with her than normal and had some honey offered by her. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﵂ says: "I developed some envy and in consultation with Ḥafṣah ﵂ decided that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would visit any one of us, she should say to him 'you have had *Maghāfīr*', (a herb that resembled gum with a slightly unpleasant smell.)"[1] They executed their plan. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I have not had any *Maghāfīr*. I only had some honey." The Holy wife said: "It is possible that the honeybee might have sat on the *Maghāfīr* shrub and drank its nectar. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, because of his natural dislike for unpleasant odour, swore and promised not to take honey any more. However, he did not want the feelings of Sayyidah Zainab ﵂ to be hurt, and therefore he said to his wife that the incident should be kept secret and should not be recounted to anyone else. But she told about it to another wife.

[1] It should be noted here that these words were spoken by them in an interrogative accent, and therefore it was not a false statement. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

Some reports say that it was at the house of Sayyidah Ḥafṣah ﷺ that he was served with honey, and that the wives who planned were Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah, Saudah and Ṣafiyyah رضی اللہ عنہن. Other reports recount the incident in other ways. It is possible that many incidents of similar nature might have taken place and these verses were revealed after them. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān].

In brief, these verses tell us that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ banned a lawful thing [honey] on himself by swearing an oath. If such an act is done for a genuine need or expedience, [*maṣlahah*], it is permissible; it is not a sin. But the incident does not show that there was no such need for him to have the trouble of baning a lawful thing on himself. He had done this for the pleasure of his holy wives. In such circumstances, it was not necessary for him to have pleased them. Therefore, the verse, compassionately addresses the Holy Prophet ﷺ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَآ اَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ لَكَ ۚ تَبْتَغِيْ مَرْضَاتَ اَزْوَاجِكَ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ (O Prophet, why do you ban (on your self) something that Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the pleasure of your wives? And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very Merciful...66:1) According to the principles of general stylistics, the Qur'ān does not address the Holy Prophet ﷺ by his name but by his Prophetic title thus: 'O Prophet' which is his special honour. Although this is a loving question posed by way of compassion, it could have created the misunderstanding that he has committed a major error and he is being questioned about it. The concluding phrase allays this suspicion: وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ meaning that even if it would have been a sin (for the sake of argument), then 'Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very Merciful.'

Ruling

There are three ways in which one can prohibit a 'lawful thing' for himself, the details of which were given under verse [87] of Sūrah Al-Mā'idah in Ma'āriful Qur'ān Vol.3/pp239-241. يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَاتُحَرِّمُوْا طَيِّبٰتِ مَآ اَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ 'O those who believe, do not make unlawful good things that Allah has made lawful for you__[5:87] The three ways may be summarised here thus: [1] If someone holds a lawful thing as unlawful as part of his religious belief, it is *kufr* and an enormous sin. [2] If he does not believe it as unlawful in religion, but bans something on himself by swearing an oath without any need to do so, it is a sinful act, and it is necessary for him to break the oath and expiate, which will be discussed

later. However, If this is done for some need or advantage, it is permissible but undesirable. [3] If someone neither believes a lawful thing to be unlawful, nor swears an oath to ban it on himself, but makes a resolve in his/her mind to abandon the lawful thing for ever. If this resolution for permanent abandonment is with the intention of reward, it would be an innovation (*bid'ah*) in the established religion and monasticism which is a reproachable sin. If such a restriction is not with the intention of reward, but rather for some other reason, such as for treatment of a physical ailment or spiritual malady, it is absolutely permissible. Reports about some noble Ṣufīs who abandoned some lawful things fall under this last category.

In this incident, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ swore an oath to abstain from honey. After the revelation of the verse, he broke the oath and expiated for it. As reported in Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, he emancipated a slave in payment of his expiation. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān]

قَدْ فَرَضَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ تَحِلَّةَ اَيْمَانِكُمْ (Allah has prescribed [the way of] absolution from your oaths....66:2). This verse reminds that where it is necessary or better to break the oath, Allah has prescribed a way to absolve oneself from the liability of the oath by expiation, the details of which are given in other verses.

وَاِذْ اَسَرَّ النَّبِىُّ اِلٰى بَعْضِ اَزْوَاجِهٖ حَدِيْثًا (And [remember] when the Prophet told one of his wives something in secret...66:3). The Holy Prophet ﷺ confided a certain secret in one of his wives. According to most versions of the authentic report, the 'secret' in this verse refers to the ban the Holy Prophet ﷺ imposed on himself about honey, but at the same time he did not want Sayyidah Zainab's رضي الله عنها feelings to be hurt and therefore he directed the wife to keep it secret from others, but the disclosing wife divulged the secret to another wife, as follows in the next verse. Although there are some other reports that explain the 'secret' in some other way, what has been mentioned above is in accordance with the most authentic narrations.

فَلَمَّا نَبَّاَتْ بِهٖ وَاَظْهَرَهُ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَّفَ بَعْضَهٗ وَاَعْرَضَ عَنْۢ بَعْضٍ (So, when she disclosed it [to another wife], and Allah made it known to him, he told [the disclosing wife] part of it, and bypassed another part...66:3). In other words, when the disclosing wife divulged the secret to another wife, and Allah disclosed

this fact to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he complained to the disclosing wife about her disclosure, but he did not convey to her the whole information. Instead, he communicated part of it to her and withheld part of it. This was because of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ magnanimity and high morals. If he had disclosed the entire information he had received from Allah, it would have embarrassed her most profoundly. Who was the disclosing wife and who was the one to whom the secret was disclosed? The Qur'ān is silent on their identity and does not name them. According to the best received narratives, it would appear that it was Sayyidah Ḥafṣah رضي الله عنها whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ directed to keep the matter secret, and she divulged it to Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, as recorded in Bukhārī on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which will be narrated later.

Some narratives report that when Sayyidah Ḥafṣah رضي الله عنها divulged the secret, the Holy Prophet ﷺ decided to divorce her, but Allah sent Jibra'īl عليه السلام to him, preventing him from divorcing her on the ground that she offered many prayers and kept fasts abundantly. Her name appears in the list of his wives in Paradise. [Maẓharī]

إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا [O two wives of the Prophet,] If both of you repent to Allah, then [your conduct calls for it, because] your hearts have diverted....66:4). The reference here is made to two of his blessed wives who, as mentioned above in brief, contrived to draw the Holy Prophet ﷺ into swearing an oath and making the aforementioned promise to abstain from honey. Who are they? Bukhārī and other collections of Traditions record a lengthy Tradition about this on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه who narrates that he was always on the look-out to enquire of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه as to who were the two wives to whom reference had been made in the above verse. So, when Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه was on his way to pilgrimage, the former joined him. One day, in the course of the journey, the latter went to answer the call of nature. When he returned, the former had arranged water for the latter's ablution. He poured water on his hands. Whilst pouring the water for ablution, he enquired as to who were the two wives to whom reference is made in the dual verb إِنْ تَتُوبَا (If both of you repent) Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه asked him in surprise: 'Do you not know who they were?' Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said: 'No!' Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه said they were Hafsah and 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنهما, and then proceeded to recount a lengthy story related to this incident which also contained some incidents

that took place earlier. The details of the incident are available in Tafsīr Maẓharī. This verse addresses the two blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and requires them to turn to Allah as their hearts have deviated, albeit what they did, stem from their love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but in the process they, in consultation with one another, adopted a way that hurt the Holy Prophet ﷺ This is a sin for which repentance was necessary.

وَ اِنْ تَظٰهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ مَوْلٰىهُ وَجِبْرِيْلُ (And if you back each other against him [the Prophet], then Allah is his supporter, and Jibrīl and righteous believers and, after all that, angels are his helpers....66:4). The current verse warns the wives that if they do not repent and please the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they will not cause any loss to him, because Allah is his Protector, and so are Jibril, every right-acting believer and, furthermore, the other angels too will come to his support, and it will be the wives themselves who will suffer loss.

عَسٰى رَبُّهٗۤ اِنْ طَلَّقَكُنَّ اَنْ يُّبْدِلَهٗۤ اَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِّنْكُنَّ (It is hoped that, if he divorces you, Allah will give him in your place wives better than you, submissive to Allah, believing, devout, penitent, steadfast in worship, fasting, previously married and virgins....66:5). The verse refutes the possible thought of the wives that if they are divorced, the Holy Prophet ﷺ will probably not get women better than themselves. The verse under comment responds to their assessment of the situation. It purports to say that nothing is beyond Allah's power. If he divorces them, Allah will give him in exchange better wives than he has at the moment. This does not necessarily imply that there were better wives than the present holy wives at that time. Possibly such women were not available at that point of time, but, should the need have arisen, He could make other women better than they are. These verses specifically dealt with the holy wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, their deeds, their moral reform, their discipline and training. Similar injunctions are given in the verses that follow for the general body of Muslims and believers.

Verses 6 - 7

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا قُوْۤا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَهْلِيْكُمْ نَارًا وَّقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ
وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلٰٓئِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَّا يَعْصُوْنَ اللّٰهَ مَاۤ اَمَرَهُمْ

وَيَفْعَلُوْنَ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا الْيَوْمَ ۭ
اِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾

O those who believe, save yourselves and your families from a fire, the fuel of which is human beings and stones, appointed on which are angels, stern and severe, who do not disobey Allah in what He orders them, and do whatever they are ordered to do. [6] **O those who disbelieve, do not make excuses today. You will only be recompensed for what you have been doing.** [7]

Commentary

قُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَهْلِيْكُمْ (O those who believe, save yourselves and your families from a fire...66:6). This verse addresses the general body of Muslims and enjoins upon them to safeguard themselves and their families from a fire of Hell whose fuel is people and stones. Then the verse goes on to describe the intensity and horror of the Hell-Fire. Towards the end of it the angels in charge of it, whose name is Zabaniah, are described. They are harsh and terrible from whom no inmate of Hell will be able to rescue himself by force, power, strength, flattery or bribery.

The word اَهْلِيْكُمْ (your families) comprehends wife, children and slaves [males as well as females]. It is not inconceivable to include full-time servants in the imperative like slaves. When this verse was revealed, Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ inquired: "O Messenger of Allah, we understand how to save ourselves from Hell, that is, we guard ourselves against sins and carry out the Divine injunctions, but how do we safeguard our families from Hell?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "Instruct them to refrain from deeds that Allah has prohibited, and ask them to carry out deeds that Allah has enjoined. This will rescue them from the Hell-Fire." [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

Education and Training of Wife and Children: Every Muslim's Responsibility

The jurists have pointed out that, according to the verse under comment, it is the responsibility of every Muslim to educate the wife and children in matters of Shar'ī obligations, and in matters of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* and train them diligently to act upon them. A *ḥadīth* says, "May

Allah shower His mercy upon a person who says: 'O my wife and children, (be mindful of) your prayers, your fasting, your alms, your indigent, your orphan, your neighbour! It is hopeful that Allah will gather all these with him in Paradise" 'Your prayers, your fasting' and so on' implies 'Take care of them. Do not ignore them.' The phrase مسكينكم يتيمكم 'Your indigent, your orphan and so on' implies 'Fulfil their rights towards them willingly and readily.' Righteous elders have said that the person deepest in punishment on the Day of Judgement will be the one whose family is ignorant and unaware of the religion. [Rūḥ]

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا الْيَوْمَ اِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ (O those who disbelieve, do not make excuses today. You will only be recompensed for what you have been doing....66:7) After advising the general body of believers, the current verse turns attention to the non-believers who are asked not to try to make excuses, because they will not be accepted. They will be told that they are merely being repaid for what they did.

Verses 8 - 12

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا تُوْبُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوْحًا ؕ عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ
يُّكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّاٰتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۙ
يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِى اللّٰهُ النَّبِىَّ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ ۚ نُوْرُهُمْ يَسْعٰى بَيْنَ
اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَبِاَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَآ اَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُوْرَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ۚ اِنَّكَ عَلٰى
كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٨﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِىُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَاغْلُظْ
عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ وَمَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ؕ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٩﴾ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا
لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوا امْرَاَتَ نُوْحٍ وَّامْرَاَتَ لُوْطٍ ؕ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ
عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ فَخَانَتٰهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْئًا وَّقِيْلَ
ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدّٰخِلِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا
امْرَاَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۘ اِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِىْ عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِى الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِىْ
مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهٖ وَنَجِّنِىْ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ

عِمْرٰنَ الَّتِیْٓ اَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِیْهِ مِنْ رُّوْحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ
بِكَلِمٰتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهٖ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقٰنِتِیْنَ ﴿۱۲﴾

O those who believe, turn to Allah with a faithful repentance. It is hoped from your Lord that he will write off your faults, and will admit you to the gardens beneath which rivers flow, on the Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him. Their light will run before them and to their right hands. They will say, "Our Lord, perfect for us our light, and forgive us. Indeed you are powerful over every thing." [8] **O Prophet, carry out *jihād* (struggle) against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be harsh with them. And their final abode is *Jahannam* (Hell), and it is an evil end.** [9]

Allah has cited for the disbelievers the example of the wife of Nūḥ and the wife of Lūṭ. Both were married with two of Our righteous slaves, but betrayed them. So they could not avail them at all, and it was said, "Enter the Fire along with those who enter." [10] **And Allah has cited for the believers the example of the wife of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh), when she said, "My Lord, build for me, near You, a house in the Paradize, and deliver me from Fir'aun and his deeds, and deliver me from the unjust people.",** [11] **and (also the example of) Maryam, daughter of 'Imrān who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her Our spirit, and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and His books, and she was one of the devout.** [12]

Commentary

تُوْبُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوْحًا (...turn to Allah with a faithful repentance...66:8). The word *taubah,* literally, means 'to turn' or 'to return', in the sense of turning or withdrawing from sins. In the terminology of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, it signifies 'to regret committing sins in the past and to firmly resolve abstaining from them in future'. *Taubah* is qualified in the verse by the word نصوح *naṣūḥ*. If it is taken as the infinitive of *naṣaḥa / naṣīḥah*, it signifies 'to make pure and sincere'; and if it be derived from *naṣāḥah,* it signifies 'to repair clothes by sewing'. In terms of the first meaning, the expression *naṣūḥ* signifies sincere/faithful [repentance], free from pretence and hypocrisy. In this interpretation, a sinner is

required to regret the sins he has committed and give them up purely for the pleasure of Allah and for fear of Divine chastisement. In terms of the second meaning, *nāṣūḥ* would signify that 'the sinner is required to repair the torn clothes of righteous deeds'. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī ﵀ says that *taubatan nāṣūḥā* signifies that a person should regret his past evil actions, and make a firm resolve never to repeat them. *Kalbī* says the phrase *taubatan naṣūḥā* signifies that a person should pray for pardon with his tongue, regret in his heart, and should prevent the limbs of his body from committing sins in the future.

Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ was asked as to what is '*taubah*' and he replied that it consists of six elements: [1] to regret one's past evil deeds; [2] to carry out Divine duties that were missed; [3] to restore the rights that were usurped; [4] to ask forgiveness of a person who has been wronged by him physically or verbally; [5] to make a firm resolve of avoiding the sin in future; and [6] to consume one's self in obedience of Allah as one thus far consumed one's self in His disobedience. [Maẓharī]. In fact, all of the conditions of '*taubah*' put forward by Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ are recognized by all the scholars. However, some have described them concisely and others in details.

عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ يُّكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ (It is hoped from your Lord that he will write off your faults...66:8). The verb *'asā* means 'it is hoped'. In this context, it purports to mean 'promise', but the expression of 'hope' is used to indicate that taubah or any other righteous deeds are not the just and equal price for the Paradise or the divine forgiveness. In fact, one compensation for man's good deeds has already been given to him in this world in the form of worldly blessings. Therefore, as regards the law of equality, it is not necessary that he is further compensated by the Jannah. It entirely depends on Divine grace and favour as is mentioned in a Ḥadīth which says: 'Your actions alone cannot salvage you.' The Companions inquired: 'O Messenger of Allah, not even you?' He replied: 'No, not even me unless the Divine grace and mercy covers me.' [Bukhārī and Muslim as quoted by Maẓharī]

ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوا امْرَاَتَ نُوْحٍ (Allah has cited for the disbelievers the example of the wife of Nūḥ and the wife of Lūṭ...66:10). Towards the end of this Sūrah, Allah has set forth examples of four women. The first example comprises two women who were the wives of two Holy Prophets

عليهما السلام. They, in matters of religion, opposed their husbands and secretly sided with the unbelievers and pagans. As a result, they ended up in the abyss of Hell, and their marital relation with the prophets could not save them from the punishment.The name of the wife of Nūḥ عليه السلام is said to be Wāghilah, while the name of the wife of Lūṭ عليه السلام is said to be Wālihah. [Qurṭubī] Some scholars have attributed other names to them.

The third woman is the one who was the wife of the Pharaoh, the worst disbeliever and claimant of godhead, but she believed in Mūsā عليه السلام. She was given such a high rank by Allah that she was shown her place in the Paradise, right here in this world, and the infidelity of her husband did not prove to be an impediment in her achieving this high rank.

The fourth woman is Maryam عليها السلام. She was not wife of anyone, but her faith and virtuous deeds earned for her such a high degree that she was invested with perfections of the prophets, even though she was not a prophet according to the majority of scholars. Verse [11] serves as a warning to the unbelievers who think that they will attain salvation merely by their companionship with believers, the good company will not rescue them in the Hereafter if they persist in their disbelief. So likewise, a disbeliever's disbelief will not harm a believing relative. Therefore, the *auliyas*' and *ambiyas*' wives should not carelessly take for granted that they will attain salvation on account of their husbands nor should the wife of a disbeliever think that his disbelief will harm her. Every person, man or woman, should be concerned about his/her own faith and action.

وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا امْرَاَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۘ اِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِيْ عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ (And Allah has cited for the believers the example of the wife of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh), when she said, "My Lord, build for me, near You, a house in the Paradise...66:11) This is the example of the wife of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) whose name was 'Āsiyah bint Muzāḥim. When Mūsā عليه السلام accomplished his task in defeating the sorcerers who embraced Mosaic faith, she too embraced the Mosaic faith and became a Muslim. Fir'aun ordered that she should be tortured severely and tormented harshly. According to some reports, her hands and feet were pegged with nails to the ground and a huge rock was placed on her chest, so that she might not be able to move. In this state she supplicated to Allah as mentioned in this verse. According to other reports, it was suggested that a huge rock be dropped on her. They had hardly dropped the rock and she prayed to

Allah as quoted in the verse. Allah then showed Sayyidah 'Āsiyah رضي الله عنها her house in Paradise. and while looking at this vision her soul departed. When the rock fell on her body, it was lifeless. [Maẓharī].

وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمٰتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهٖ (and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and His books, and she was one of the devout....66:12) The phrase 'Words of her Lord' refers to scriptures that were revealed to the Holy Prophets. The word *kutub* [Books] refers to the well-known celestial books - *Injīl*, Zabūr and Torah. The concluding statement وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقٰنِتِيْنَ (and she was one of the devout....66:12) describes the quality of Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام. The word *qānitīn* is the plural of *qānit* and signifies 'devout and obedient'. Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whilst many men have attained spiritual perfection, among women only Sayyidah 'Āsiyah, wife of Fir'aun, and Sayyidah Maryam, daughter of 'Imrān عليهما السلام, achieved this perfection." [Bukhārī and Muslim as quoted by Maẓharī]. Apparently, 'perfection' in this context refers to 'characteristics of Prophethood'. Despite being a woman, she achieved them. [Maẓharī]. And Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Taḥrīm
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mulk

(The Kingdom)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 30 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 30

تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِىْ بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ ز وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرُ ﴿١﴾ نِالَّذِىْ
خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيٰوةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ اَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ط وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ
الْغَفُوْرُ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ طِبَاقًا ط مَا تَرٰى فِىْ خَلْقِ
الرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْ تَفٰوُتٍ ط فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ لا هَلْ تَرٰى مِنْ فُطُوْرٍ ﴿٣﴾ ثُمَّ
ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ اِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَّهُوَ حَسِيْرٌ ﴿٤﴾
وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيْحَ وَجَعَلْنٰهَا رُجُوْمًا لِّلشَّيٰطِيْنِ
وَاَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيْرِ ﴿٥﴾ وَلِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ
جَهَنَّمَ ط وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٦﴾ اِذَآ اُلْقُوْا فِيْهَا سَمِعُوْا لَهَا شَهِيْقًا وَّهِىَ
تَفُوْرُ ﴿٧﴾ تَكَادُ تَمَيَّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ ط كُلَّمَآ اُلْقِىَ فِيْهَا فَوْجٌ سَاَلَهُمْ
خَزَنَتُهَآ اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ نَذِيْرٌ ﴿٨﴾ قَالُوْا بَلٰى قَدْ جَآءَنَا نَذِيْرٌ لا فَكَذَّبْنَا
وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ شَىْءٍ صلے اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ كَبِيْرٍ ﴿٩﴾ وَقَالُوْا
لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ اَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِىْٓ اَصْحٰبِ السَّعِيْرِ ﴿١٠﴾ فَاعْتَرَفُوْا
بِذَنْۢبِهِمْ ج فَسُحْقًا لِّاَصْحٰبِ السَّعِيْرِ ﴿١١﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ

بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّاَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿١٢﴾ وَاَسِرُّوْا قَوْلَكُمْ اَوِ اجْهَرُوْا بِهٖ
اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿١٣﴾ اَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيْفُ
الْخَبِيْرُ ﴿١٤﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ ذَلُوْلًا فَامْشُوْا فِيْ
مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوْا مِنْ رِّزْقِهٖ وَاِلَيْهِ النُّشُوْرُ ﴿١٥﴾ ءَاَمِنْتُمْ مَّنْ فِي
السَّمَآءِ اَنْ يَّخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْاَرْضَ فَاِذَا هِيَ تَمُوْرُ ﴿١٦﴾ اَمْ اَمِنْتُمْ مَّنْ
فِي السَّمَآءِ اَنْ يُّرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْلَمُوْنَ كَيْفَ نَذِيْرِ
﴿١٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ ﴿١٨﴾ اَوَلَمْ
يَرَوْا اِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صٰٓفّٰتٍ وَّيَقْبِضْنَ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ اِلَّا الرَّحْمٰنُ
اِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ اَمَّنْ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَّكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ
مِّنْ دُوْنِ الرَّحْمٰنِ اِنِ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ غُرُوْرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ اَمَّنْ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ
يَرْزُقُكُمْ اِنْ اَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهٗ بَلْ لَّجُّوْا فِيْ عُتُوٍّ وَّنُفُوْرٍ ﴿٢١﴾ اَفَمَنْ
يَّمْشِيْ مُكِبًّا عَلٰى وَجْهِهٖٓ اَهْدٰٓى اَمَّنْ يَّمْشِيْ سَوِيًّا عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ
مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْشَاَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْاَبْصَارَ
وَالْاَفْـِٕدَةَ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِيْ ذَرَاَكُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ
وَاِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ
﴿٢٥﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَاِنَّمَآ اَنَا نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَوْهُ
زُلْفَةً سِيْٓـَٔتْ وُجُوْهُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَقِيْلَ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تَدَّعُوْنَ
﴿٢٧﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ اَهْلَكَنِيَ اللّٰهُ وَمَنْ مَّعِيَ اَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَنْ يُّجِيْرُ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمٰنُ اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ وَعَلَيْهِ
تَوَكَّلْنَا فَسَتَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ هُوَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ
اَصْبَحَ مَآؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَّاْتِيْكُمْ بِمَآءٍ مَّعِيْنٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

Glorious is the One in whose hand is the Kingdom (of

the whole universe), and He is powerful over every thing, [1] the One who created death and life, so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds. And He is the All-Mighty, the Most-Forgiving, [2] Who has created seven skies, one over the other. You will see nothing out of proportion in the creation of the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful). So, cast your eye again. Do you see any rifts? [3] Then cast your eye again and again, and the eye will come back to you abased, in a state of weariness. [4] And We have decorated the nearest sky with lamps, and have made them devices to stone the devils, and We have prepared for them the punishment of Hell. [5] And for those who disbelieve, there is the punishment of *Jahannam*, and it is an evil end. [6] When they will be thrown in it, they will hear a terrible sound from it, and it will be boiling, [7] seeming as if it will burst out of fury. Whenever a group is thrown into it, its keepers will say to them, "Had no warner come to you?" [8] They said, "Yes, a warner had come to us, but We had rejected, and said, 'Allah has not revealed any thing. You are only in great error'." [9] And they will say, "Had we been listening or understanding, we would not have been among the people of Hell." [10] Thus they will confess their sin. So, be the people of Hell away (from Allah's mercy). [11] Surely, for those who have awe of their Lord without seeing (Him), there is forgiveness and a big reward. [12] And whether you keep your talk secret or make it aloud, He knows well what lies in the hearts. [13] Is it (imaginable) that He who has created (them) will not have (such a) knowledge, while He is the Knower of the finest things, the All-Aware? [14] He is the One who has made the earth submissive for you, so walk on its shoulders, and eat out of His provision, and to Him will be the Resurrection. [15] Have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He makes you sink into the earth, and it starts trembling at once? [16] Or, have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He looses a violent wind with stones against you? So, you will soon come to know how was My warning! [17] And of course, those before them (also) rejected (the truth). So, how was My censure? [18]

Have they not looked to the birds above them spreading their wings, and (at times) they fold (them) in? No one holds them up except the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful). Surely He is watchful of every thing. [19] Now, who is

there to become a force for you to help you, except the Raḥmān? The disbelievers are in nothing but delusion. [20] **Or, who is there to give you sustenance, if He withholds His sustenance? Still, they persist in rebellion and aversion.** [21] **Then, tell me whether the one who walks falling down (frequently) on his face is better guided or the one who walks on a straight path?** [22]

Say, "He is the One who has originated you, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts. How little you pay gratitude" [23] **Say, "He is the One who has scattered you on the earth, and to Him you will be assembled."** [24] **And they say, "When will this promise (of the Day of Judgment) be fulfilled, if you are true?"** [25] **Say, "The knowledge (of that day) is only with Allah, and I am only a plain warner.** [26] **Then, once they will see it approaching, the faces of the disbelievers will be turned awkward, and it will be said, "This is what you were calling for!"** [27] **Say, "Tell me, if Allah destroys me and those who are with me (as you wish), or has mercy on us (as we wish), who can (in either case) save the disbelievers from a painful punishment?"** [28] **Say, "He is the Raḥmān; we have believed in Him, and in Him we placed our trust. So, you will soon come to know who is in an open error."** [29] **Say, "Tell me if your water were to vanish into the earth, who will bring you a flowing (stream) water?** [30]

Commentary

The Virtues of Sūrah Al-Mulk

Prophetic Tradition has named this Sūrah as Wāqiyah (protector) and *Munjiyah* (saviour) as well. In a Tradition, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

هِيَ المانعة المنجية تنجيه من عذاب القبر

"It [the Sūrah] is the protector and saviour which will rescue and redeem him who recites it from the torment of the grave." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī who has graded it as '*ḥasan, gharīb*' as quoted by Qurṭubī]

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"It is my heart's desire that Sūrah Al-Mulk be in every believer's heart." [[Tha'labi]

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

has said:

> "Verily, there is a Surah in the Book of Allah (Qur'an) containing thirty verses that will intercede on behalf of him who recites it until he is rescued from Hell and admitted to Paradise; and it is Sūrah Tabārak." [Qurṭubī cites it from Tirmidhī].

تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِىْ بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ (Glorious is the One in whose hand is the Kingdom [of the whole universe], and He is powerful over every thing...67:1). The word *Tabāraka* is derived from *barakah*, which literally means 'to grow' or 'increase'. When it is related to Allah, it signifies 'to be highest in all respects' and it conveys a meaning similar to *Allahu Akbar* 'Allah is the Highest'.

بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ (in Whose hand is the Kingdom): The word *Yad* (hand) is attributed to Allah at many places in the Qur'ān, whereas He is beyond having a body, limbs or organs. As a result, the word must, of necessity, be taken as one of the *mutashābihāt*. We need to believe in its reality, but it is not possible for anyone to grasp its exact nature. It is improper to pursue this subject. The word *Mulk* (Kingdom) refers to the Kingdom of the whole universe, of the heavens and the earth and of the mortal world as well as of the Hereafter.

The verse under comment refers to four of the Divine attributes. Firstly, His existence; secondly, His comprehending all the attributes of perfection and being most Exalted; thirdly, His being the ruler of the heavens and earth; and fourthly, His having power over everything. The verses that follow are adduced as proofs of these attributes, which become clear by pondering over the creation of Allah. Therefore, the next verses refer to the various types of creation in the universe as proofs positive of the existence and Oneness of Allah and His all-encompassing knowledge and power. To begin with, reference is made to those proofs of the divine omnipotence that are available in human beings themselves who are the noblest creation in the universe. The words اَلَّذِىْ خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيٰوةَ (the One who created death and life) are meant for this purpose, (as will be explained shortly). Then, several verses (3 to 5) invite consideration to the creation of heavens to find proofs of Allah's omnipotence. Thereafter, verses 15 and 16 call our attention to the creation of the earth and its

benefits. Lastly, the creatures living in the heavenly atmosphere, that is, the birds are mentioned in verse 19.

In short, the basic subject of the Sūrah is to prove the existence of Allah and His perfect knowledge and power by inviting consideration to the marvels of this universe. However, as a subsidiary subject, some other realities are also mentioned like punishment for unbelievers and reward for believers.

The proofs of the divine knowledge and power found in the man himself are indicated in the following two words:

The Reality of Life and Death

خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيٰوةَ (...the One who created death and life...67:2) Out of the human conditions, only two phenomena, i.e. life and death are mentioned here, because they cover all of human conditions and actions of his entire life. The creation of 'life' is quite obvious, because life is a positive reality that can be the object of creation and bringing into existence. However, one may ask how 'death' can be 'created', while it is a negative concept that refers to a state of non-existence. In answer to this question, the leading commentators have come up with different explanations. The most plausible one is that 'death' is not a state of pure non-existence. It actually refers to the removal of soul from the body and its transfer from one place to another. Thus it is a positive phenomenon. Just as 'life' is a phenomenon that relates to a human body, 'death' too is a phenomenon that overtakes him. Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and other leading commentators have mentioned that 'life' and 'death' are two corporal entities. 'Death' has the corporal shape of a ram, and 'life' that of a mare. This statement apparently interprets the authentic Tradition which states that when the inmates of Paradise will have entered Paradise, and the inmates of Hell will have entered Hell, death will be brought in the form of a ram and will be slaughtered near *Ṣirāt* (the Bridge) and it will be announced that there shall be no more death, and every one shall remain in the same state eternally as he or she will have attained. It may not necessarily be deduced from this Tradition that 'death' is a corporal entity in the mortal world also. There are many abstract conditions and actions in this world, which will assume concrete shapes and bodies in the Hereafter. This is verified by many authentic

Traditions. 'Death', which is a condition that overtake man, will also assume the shape of a concretised ram and will be slaughtered. [Qurṭubī]

Tafsīr Maẓharī has stated that although 'death' is a negative phenomenon, it is not pure non-existence. It is a state of non-existence for a thing that will at some time come into existence. All such non-existent things have shapes in the World of Similitudes عالم المثال [*'Ālam-ul-Mithāl*] before coming into existence in the realm of creation عالم الناسوت [*'Ālam-un-Nāsūt*]. Such non-existent things are called الاعيان الثابتة *al-A'yān-uth-Thābitah*. On account of these shapes, they do have some sort of existence even before they come into perceived existence. The existence of the World of Similitude [*'Ālam-ul-Mithāl*] has been proved by the commentator through various *aḥādīth*. And Allah knows best!

Various Categories of Death and Life

It is stated in Tafsīr Maẓharī that Allah, with His Supreme Power and Consummate Wisdom, has divided His creation into different types. Each one is awarded 'life' befitting its type. The perfect and consummate life is awarded to man, which has been invested with the capability to recognise the Divine Being and His Attributes to a specific degree. It is on the basis of this recognition that he is made liable to carry out the sacred laws of Sharī'ah, which has been termed by the Qur'ān as a 'trust'. The heavens, the earth and the mountains feared to bear the burden of this trust but man, on account of his God-given capability, bore it. The antonym of this type of 'life' is the particular type of 'death', which is mentioned in the verse:

اَوَمَنْ كَانَ مَيْتًا فَاَحْيَيْنٰهُ

'Could it be that the one who was dead and We gave him life. [6:122]'

In this verse, a non-believer is referred to as 'dead' and a believer as 'alive', because a non-believer has wasted his 'recognition of Allah' that was the essential characteristic of this type of life. In other types or species of creation, this quality of life is absent, but they do possess senses and capability of movement, which is the second category of life. The antonym of this degree of life is the 'death' referred to by the Qur'ān thus:

كُنتُمْ اَمْوَاتًا فَاَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ

'...you were lifeless and He gave you life, then He will make you die, then make you live again. [2:28]

In this context, 'life' refers to the ability to sense and move, and 'death' refers to its cessation. Some of the existent entities do not even possess the ability of sensing and movement. They merely possess the capability of growth as in the case of trees and vegetables. 'Life' is attributed to them as well in a limited sense (of growing), and as opposed to this, their 'death' is to lose the ability to grow. In this sense, the Holy Qur'ān has used the words 'life' and 'death' in the following verse:

يُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

'...how He brings the dead earth back to life. [30:50]'.

These degrees of life are confined to humankind, the animal kingdom and the vegetable kingdom. No other species of creation possesses these qualities of life. Therefore, idols made of stones are referred to in the Qur'ān as

اَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ اَحْيَآءٍ

'- dead, having no life_[16:21]

Nevertheless, inorganic matters too have a special (though very limited) element of 'life', which is necessary to the concept of existence. It is due to this element of 'life' that the Holy Qur'ān says:

وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ

'...And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity and praise. [17:44]

This analysis also explains why 'death' in the above verse has been mentioned before 'life'. The reason seems to be that death or non-existence is the state that comes before life. In other words, everything that came into existence was in the beginning in a state of lifelessness or non-existence, then it was awarded life.

Another explanation of mentioning 'death' before 'life' could be that the verse itself has declared that the purpose of creating human death and life is 'test',

لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ اَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

'...so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds. [2]

This test is more important and is of greater significance in 'death' rather than in 'life', because the one who thinks of death constantly will have the tendency to do more and more righteous deeds. No doubt, the element of test is available in 'life' too, because every step of one's life reminds him of his own inability and powerlessness as against Allah's absolute power, which creates in him the tendency to act righteously. The thought of death, however, is most effective in correcting one's conduct. Sayyidnā 'Ammār Ibn Yāsir ﷺ reports a Prophetic Ḥadīth which says:

كفى بالموت واعظا وكفى باليقين غنى

"Death is sufficient as a preacher, and certitude is sufficient as a cause of being free from needs." [Transmitted by Tabārani]

This signifies that witnessing the death of friends and relatives is the most effective preacher. If that does not exert any influence on one, nothing else will. And he whom Allah has granted the wealth of faith and certitude is the most need-free person.

Sayyidnā Rabī' Ibn Anas ﷺ has stated that the thought of 'death' makes man disgusted with this world and makes him inclined towards the Hereafter.

لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ اَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (...so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds....67:2). It should be noted here that Allah did not say 'which of you does *more* deeds', but said 'which of you is *better* in deeds'. This indicates that it is not the quantity of actions that counts, but rather the quality of actions, that is, their being righteous and acceptable in the sight of Allah. That is why man's actions will not be counted on the Day of Judgement, but they will be weighed. In some instances, the weight of one action would be heavier than a thousand actions.

What is a Good Action?

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ said that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited verse [2] and when he reached the words " better in deeds", he stopped and explained that 'better in deeds' is the person who abstains most from

the things Allah has forbidden and is always ready to obey Him. [Qurṭubī]

فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرٰى مِنْ فُطُوْرٍ (So, cast your eye again. Do you see any rifts?...67:3). Apparently, this verse shows that it is possible to see the nearest sky with the naked eyes. Sky, in this context, does not necessarily refer to the bluish atmosphere seen over the earth. In fact, the sky may be very much higher than this, and the bluish colour may be that of the upper atmosphere, as claimed by the scientists. This, on the other hand, does not necessarily imply that the sky cannot be seen at all. It is possible that the bluish atmosphere, on account of being transparent, may not block the vision of the actual sky. However, if it is proved by any evidence that the sky cannot be seen with eyes, then the 'casting ones eyes' in this verse would refer to 'intellectual observation'. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān]

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيْحَ وَجَعَلْنٰهَا رُجُوْمًا لِّلشَّيٰطِيْنِ (And We have decorated the nearest sky with lamps, and have made them devices to stone the devils, and We have prepared for them the punishment of Hell....67:5). The word '*maṣabīḥ*' (translated above as 'lamps') stands for 'stars'. The fact that the sky is decorated with stars does not necessarily imply that they should be studded with them inside or under the sky. The decoration is available also to the situation when the stars are far below the sky in space as modern research has proved it by observation. This is not contradictory to the classical interpretation.

The statement '[We] have made them [stars] devices to stone the devils' probably implies that some fiery matters originating from the stars are used to shoot at them, and the stars themselves remain intact in their position. Since this illuminated matter seems to the common people as 'falling stars'. [Qurṭubī]. This further shows that devils who attempt to eavesdrop [illegible] celestial [illegible]nversations for information are driven away before they can reach the stars. [Qurṭubī]. Thus far evidence and proofs of Allah's consummate knowledge and power were adduced with reference to the various types of creation. In the verses that follow the subject of punishment for unbelievers and of reward for believers and the obedient is taken up, thus:

وَلِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ (And for those who disbelieve, there is the punishment of *Jahannam* ...67:6). The subject runs through seven verses.

Thereafter, the subject of Divine knowledge and power is revisited.

هُوَ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ ذَلُوْلًا (He is the One who has made the earth submissive for you ...67:15) The word *dhalūl* signifies 'submissive'. When *dhalūl* is used for an animal, it means that it is not insolent when someone is riding it. The word *manākib* is the plural of *mankib*, which means 'shoulder', which in animals refer to the upper part of their front legs. Normally, this is not the part of the animals where a rider would sit to ride them. Their back or neck are involved in riding. But an animal that offers its shoulders as well to the riders is very obedient and submissive. Therefore, the verse says that Allah 'has made the earth submissive for you, so walk on its shoulders'. Allah has made the structure of earth such that it is not liquid like water so that it flows, nor is it like mud, mire or slime, because if the earth were to be in any of these states, it would not have been possible for man to live in it. Nor is it made hard like rocks or iron, for in that state it would not have been possible for him to plough the fields to sow his crops and derive various other types of benefit from the earth. Wells and rivers could not have been dug. It would not have been possible to dig trenches into the ground to lay foundations of huge buildings. With such well-balanced infrastructure, He granted him tranquillity that it is possible for buildings to stand on it and for people, moving on its surface, to avoid slipping.

وَكُلُوْا مِنْ رِّزْقِهٖ (...and eat out of His provision ...67:15). After directing man to travel on earth, it is said 'eat out of His provision'. This probably indicates that commercial trips carried out for import and export are the doors for obtaining livelihood from Allah.

وَاِلَيْهِ النُّشُوْرُ (...and to Him is the Resurrection...67:15). This warning tells us that man is permitted to draw benefits of eating, drinking and living from the earth, but he is reminded at the same time not to be neglectful of death and life-after-death. Eventually, he will have to leave this world for the Hereafter. Whilst living on the earth, he must prepare for life-after-death. In this verse, man is warned that eventually he will return to Allah on the Day of Resurrection. The next verse warns that the Divine punishment can overtake him, even when living on the earth.

ءَاَمِنْتُمْ مَّنْ فِى السَّمَآءِ اَنْ يَّخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْاَرْضَ فَاِذَا هِىَ تَمُوْرُ (Have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He makes you sink into the earth, and it starts

trembling at once?...67:16). It means: Though Allah has granted the earth such a balanced infrastructure that man cannot go into it without digging, yet Allah has the power to make the earth swallow up all the communities living on its surface.

The next verse warns people of another type of punishment:

اَمْ اَمِنْتُمْ مَّنْ فِى السَّمَآءِ اَنْ يُّرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ؕ فَسَتَعْلَمُوْنَ كَيْفَ نَذِيْرِ (Or, have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He looses a violent wind with stones against you? So, you will soon come to know how was My warning! - 67:17). In other words, they at the moment feel secure that the Supreme Being in the heaven will not release against them a sudden squall of stones together with violent wind. Soon they will realise how true the Divine warning was, but by the time they realise its veracity it would be too late. Now that they are safe, sound and secure, it is the time for them to give it a thought.

The next verse refers to the former nations who denied and rejected the truth and how they were annihilated by Divine scourge. Every person needs to draw a lesson from the punishment meted out to them.

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ (And of course, those before them [also] rejected [the truth]. So, how was My censure?...67:18)

The next verse turns once again to the central theme of the Sūrah, that is, the description of various forms and functions of Allah's creation to prove His Oneness, His knowledge and power. Thus far human souls, forms and functions of the sky, the stars, the earth and so on were discussed. The next verse mentions birds that fly about in the atmosphere above us.

اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صٰٓفّٰتٍ وَّيَقْبِضْنَ ؕۘ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ اِلَّا الرَّحْمٰنُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍۭ بَصِيْرٌ (Have they not looked to the birds above them spreading their wings, and (at times) they fold (them) in? No one holds them up except the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful). Surely He is watchful of every thing...67:19)

This verse invites attention to the fact that the birds have weight, and in terms of the law of gravity, weighty bodies should fall down on the earth, if they are released from above. Normally, it is not possible for the air to hold them up. But Allah, through His consummate power, has created these birds in such a way that they can hold themselves up in the

air. Apparently, they have no intellect, but Allah has taught them the art to make the air carry their burden and to fly in it by manoeuvring their wings in such a way that at times they outspread them and at other times they fold them back. In this way they subjugate the air to their benefit. It is obvious that enabling air to hold them up, designing the wings of the birds on this particular shape and teaching them the art of controlling the air, all these functions were possible only by Allah's Supreme Creative Power.

Thus far the conditions of various categories and species of existent beings were analysed and considered in order to provide evidence of Divine existence, His Oneness, His unique knowledge and power. If a fair-minded person were to consider them carefully, he will have no choice but to believe in Allah. From the next verse up to the end of the Surah, the non-believers and the unrighteous people of all categories are warned of the Divine scourge. First, they are admonished that if Allah decides to punish any nation, there is no power in the world that can stop Him. There is no fighting force or army of soldiers that can come to the support of the disbelievers and save them. Thus the next verse says:

اَمَّنْ هٰذَا الَّذِیْ هُوَجُنْدٌ لَّكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ الرَّحْمٰنِ ؕ اِنِ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ اِلَّا فِیْ غُرُوْرٍ (Now, who is there to become a force for you to help you, except the Raḥmān? The disbelievers are in nothing but delusion...67:20).

Then the next verse warns the disbelievers that the sustenance Allah grants them by sending down rain from the clouds and by growing plants/ vegetation in the earth is not their personal property. It is a gift and bounty from Allah. If He wills, He can withhold it. This is the import of the following verse:

اَمَّنْ هٰذَ الَّذِیْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ اِنْ اَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهٗ ۚ بَلْ لَّجُّوْا فِیْ عُتُوٍّ وَّنُفُوْرٍ (Or, who is there to give you sustenance, if He withholds His sustenance? Still, they persist in rebellion and aversion. [67:21]'.

The last sentence of the verse purports to express the unbelievers' sad state of affairs. They neither consider the Signs of Allah nor do they pay heed to other people's good advice. They obstinately persist in insolence and deviation from the Truth.

Next, the conditions of non-believers and believers on the field of

Resurrection are described. It is mentioned that the unbelievers will be brought to the field of Resurrection, crawling on their faces instead of walking on their feet. Bukhārī and Muslim record on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ that the noble Companions asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "How will the non-believers walk on their faces on the Day of Resurrection?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "Is Allah who made them walk on their feet not powerful enough to make them walk on their faces and their heads?" The following verse depicts the scene of such crawling:

اَفَمَنْ يَّمْشِىْ مُكِبًّا عَلٰى وَجْهِهٖٓ اَهْدٰٓى اَمَّنْ يَّمْشِىْ سَوِيًّا عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ (Then, tell me whether the one who walks falling down [frequently] on his face is better guided or the one who walks on a straight path...67:22).

The phrase 'the one who walks on a straight path' refers to the believer who is rightly guided. The next verse describes the manifestation of Divine power and wisdom in the creation of man, thus:

قُلْ هُوَالَّذِىْٓ اَنْشَاَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْاَبْصَارَ وَالْاَفْـِٕدَةَ ؕ قَلِيْلًا مَّاتَشْكُرُوْنَ (Say, "He is the One who has originated you, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts. How little you pay gratitude"...67:23).

Specifying ears, eyes and Heart

Of all the human sense organs, only three are mentioned here on which depends knowledge and perception of the external world. Philosophers have identified five sources of knowledge and perception that are called 'five senses': to see, hear, smell, taste or feel something. Allah has equipped man with 'nose' to smell, with 'tongue' to taste, with 'ears' to hear and with 'eyes' to see; Allah has spread 'skin' throughout man's body to feel. But out of the five physical senses, only two have been mentioned, namely, ears and eyes, because man receives a very limited range of knowledge by smelling, tasting and feeling. Man depends for information largely on hearing and seeing. Of the two organs, his sense of hearing is mentioned first, because a careful analysis shows that most of the information gathered in human life is through hearing, not so much by seeing. The third organ mentioned specifically is the 'heart', because that is the centre of knowledge. Knowledge received through hearing and seeing depends on the human 'heart', unlike the theory of the philosophers and scientists who believe that the centre of knowledge is the

human 'brain'.

After this, the non-believers are threatened with punishment. Towards the end of the Sūrah, a statement is once again repeated to remind them which purports to say: 'O you who live on the earth, dig wells and drink water from it to quench your thirst and grow plants and vegetation, do not forget that none of these things is your personal property. They are a Divine gift. He sent down water, and loaded it in the form of ice and reserved it on the peaks of mountains, so that it may not putrefy. Then He caused the congealed water to melt gradually and allow it to seep or soak into the earth through the pores or small interstices of the mountains and allowed a network of melted water to spread throughout the earth without any pipeline. Whenever man requires, he could dig a few meters deep into the earth from its upper surface to obtain water. This is a Divine gift. If He wills, He could send the water down into the depths of the earth, and it would not be accessible to anyone. This is the import of the following verse.

قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ اَصْبَحَ مَآؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَّأْتِيْكُمْ بِمَآءٍ مَّعِيْنٍ (Say, "Tell me, Should your water vanish into the earth, who will bring you a flowing [stream] water?"... (67:30).

In other words, if all the water, which people draw from the wells easily, were to disappear into the depths of the earth, do they have any power through which they will be able to obtain pure running water? Obviously, the answer in negative.

It is recorded in a Tradition that when a person recites this verse, he should say

اَللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ "Allah, the Lord of the worlds" That is, it is Allah alone who can bring it back to us. None of us has the power.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mulk
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qalam
(The Pen)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 52 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 52

نٓ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُوْنَ ﴿١﴾ مَآ اَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُوْنٍ ﴿٢﴾
وَاِنَّ لَكَ لَاَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُوْنٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَاِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى خُلُقٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٤﴾
فَسَتُبْصِرُ وَيُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ بِاَيِّيكُمُ الْمَفْتُوْنُ ﴿٦﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ
بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ۖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ فَلَا تُطِعِ
الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَدُّوْا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَا تُطِعْ كُلَّ
حَلَّافٍ مَّهِيْنٍ ﴿١٠﴾ هَمَّازٍ مَّشَّآءٍ بِنَمِيْمٍ ﴿١١﴾ مَّنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ
اَثِيْمٍ ﴿١٢﴾ عُتُلٍّ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ زَنِيْمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ اَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ ﴿١٤﴾
اِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتُنَا قَالَ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ سَنَسِمُهٗ عَلَى
الْخُرْطُوْمِ ﴿١٦﴾ اِنَّا بَلَوْنٰهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَآ اَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ اِذْ اَقْسَمُوْا
لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا
طَآئِفٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَآئِمُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَاَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيْمِ ﴿٢٠﴾
فَتَنَادَوْا مُصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ اَنِ اغْدُوْا عَلٰى حَرْثِكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰرِمِيْنَ
﴿٢٢﴾ فَانْطَلَقُوْا وَهُمْ يَتَخَافَتُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ اَنْ لَّا يَدْخُلَنَّهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ

مِّسْكِيْنٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَّغَدَوْا عَلٰى حَرْدٍ قٰدِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَوْهَا قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا
لَضَآلُّوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُوْمُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ اَوْسَطُهُمْ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ
لَّكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾
فَاَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ يَّتَلَاوَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَالُوْا يٰوَيْلَنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا
طٰغِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ عَسٰى رَبُّنَآ اَنْ يُّبْدِلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَآ اِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا رٰغِبُوْنَ
﴿٣٢﴾ كَذٰلِكَ الْعَذَابُ ط وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ م لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ
﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٣٤﴾ اَفَنَجْعَلُ
الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ كَالْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ مَا لَكُمْ قف كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اَمْ
لَكُمْ كِتٰبٌ فِيْهِ تَدْرُسُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيْهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ اَمْ
لَكُمْ اَيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بَالِغَةٌ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ لا اِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُوْنَ
﴿٣٩﴾ سَلْهُمْ اَيُّهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ زَعِيْمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ اَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَآءُ ج فَلْيَاْتُوْا
بِشُرَكَآئِهِمْ اِنْ كَانُوْا صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ
وَّيُدْعَوْنَ اِلَى السُّجُوْدِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ خَاشِعَةً اَبْصَارُهُمْ
تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ط وَقَدْ كَانُوْا يُدْعَوْنَ اِلَى السُّجُوْدِ وَهُمْ سٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾
فَذَرْنِيْ وَمَنْ يُّكَذِّبُ بِهٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ ط سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ
لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاُمْلِيْ لَهُمْ ط اِنَّ كَيْدِيْ مَتِيْنٌ ﴿٤٥﴾ اَمْ تَسْئَلُهُمْ
اَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّغْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ اَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُوْنَ
﴿٤٧﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوْتِ م اِذْ نَادٰى
وَهُوَ مَكْظُوْمٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ لَوْلَآ اَنْ تَدٰرَكَهٗ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَآءِ وَهُوَ
مَذْمُوْمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَاجْتَبٰهُ رَبُّهٗ فَجَعَلَهٗ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَاِنْ يَّكَادُ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَيُزْلِقُوْنَكَ بِاَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّهٗ
لَمَجْنُوْنٌ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَا هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾

Nūn, by the pen and what they write, [1] with the grace of your Lord, you are not insane. [2] And you will definitely have a reward that will never end. [3] And you are surely on exalted quality of character. [4] So, you will see, and they will see [5] which of you is demented. [6] Surely your Lord knows best who has strayed from his way, and He is well-aware of those who are on the right path. [7] So, do not obey those who reject (the true faith.) [8] They wish that you become flexible (in your faith), and they will become flexible (in their hostile attitude.) [9] And do not obey any contemptible one who swears much, [10] a slanderer who goes about with calumnies, [11] one who prevents good, (and who is) transgressor, sinful, [12] harsh, (and) after all that, notorious, [13] (do not obey such a person merely) because he is a man of wealth and sons. [14] When Our verses are recited to him, he says, "(These are) the tales of the ancient." [15] We will soon brand him on the snout. [16] We have tested them as We had tested the Owners of the Garden, when they had sworn an oath that they would pluck its fruits on the next morning, [17] and did not make any exception (by saying '*insha'allah*'). [18] Then, there whirled around it a whirl (of calamity) from your Lord, while they were asleep. [19] Thus, on the next morning, it was like a harvested field. [20] So, they called out each other as the morning broke, [21] saying, "Set out early, if you are going to pluck (the fruits)." [22] So they set out while they were whispering to each other, [23] saying, "Let no poor man enter into it upon you today." [24] And in early hours they rushed quickly, while they were (assuming themselves) powerful (to pluck the fruits and prevent the poor.) [25] But when they saw it (the place of the ruined garden), they said, "We have missed the way." [26] (Then, once they realized that the garden is the same, but it has been destroyed, they said,) "No, but we are deprived (of the fruits)." [27] Said he who was the best among them, "Did I not say to you, 'Why do you not pronounce *tasbīḥ* (Allah's purity)?" [28] They said, "We pronounce the purity of our Lord. No doubt, we were wrongdoers." [29] Then, (at the beginning,) they started reproaching one another; [30] (and at last,) they said, "Woe to us! In fact, we (all) were outrageous. [31] We hope that our Lord will give us in exchange something better than this. Truly we turn to Allah." [32]

In this way the punishment comes. And, of course, the

punishment of the Hereafter is even greater, if they but realize! [33] **Surely, for the God-fearing are the gardens of bliss.** [34] **Otherwise, shall We make the obedient like the sinners?** [35] **What has happened to you? How do you judge?** [36] **Do you have a book in which you read** [37] **that for you there is what you choose?** [38] **Or do you have oaths sworn by Us, remaining effective up to the Day of Judgment, that you will get what you decide?** [39] **Ask them which of them stands surety for that.** [40] **Or do they have associate-gods (who have guaranteed safety for them? Then, let them bring their associate-gods, if they are true,** [41] **on the Day when the Shin will be exposed,**[1] **and they will be called upon to prostrate themselves, but they will not be able to.** [42] **With their eyes downcast, they will be enveloped by ignominy. And they used to be called upon to prostrate when they were healthy (but they did not.)** [43]

So, leave Me alone with those who reject this discourse. We will draw them on little by little (towards Hell) from a way they do not know. [44] **And I give them respite. Indeed, My plan is firm.** [45] **Is it that you ask them for a fee, due to which they are burdened with debt?** [46] **Or do they have the (knowledge of the) Unseen, and they write it down?** [47]

So, remain patient with your Lord's judgment, and be not like the Man of the Fish,[2] **he cried out while he was**

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(1). This is the literal translation of the Qur'anic phrase used here. The exegetes have explained it in two different ways. Some of them are of the view that, according to the Arabic usage, 'exposure of the shin' is an idiomatic expression for a severe state of distress. When a person is confronted with such a distress, he normally lays his shins bare. Therefore, exposure of the shin has been taken as indicative of such a state. Given this interpretation, the verse means that on the day when the disbelievers will face the severe distress, they will be called upon to prostrate themselves, but they will not be able to do so, because their backs will be made flat, with no elasticity to bow down. Some other commentators, however, take the phrase in its literal sense. They say that the 'Shin' referred to here is the Shin of Allah Ta'ala, which is one of His attributes, the exact nature of which is neither known to anybody, nor discoverable in this world. (But obviously, it is not like the shins of human beings). According to this interpretation, the verse means that, at some stage on the Day of Judgment, Allah Ta'ala will expose this attribute of His which is called 'Shin', and they will be called upon to prostrate before it. This interpretation is supported by an authentic *hadith* reported by Bukhari and Muslim.

(2). It refers to Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام who was devoured by a fish after he left his nation. Full description of the event has been given in Surah Yūnus.

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in anguish. [48] **Had not a favour from His Lord come to his help, he would have been cast in the wilderness in a reproachable state.** [3] [49] **Then his Lord chose him, and made him one of the righteous.** [50]

And indeed the disbelievers seem to trip you up with their glances [4] **when they hear the Reminder, and say, "He is a madman indeed."** [51] **And it is nothing else but a Reminder for all the worlds.** [52]

Commentary

Linkage of Sūrahs

The preceding Sūrah dealt with the existence of Allah, His Oneness, and His knowledge and power, and adduced, as a positive proof of these attributes, was the fact that Allah is the Creator of death and life, and of the entire universe through whose component parts there runs the beautiful order that pervades the cosmos. He has created man to serve a sublime object and to achieve a noble goal. But man in his ingratitude has always rejected the Divine Message and consequently has been incurring Divine scourge. This is mentioned, in Sūrah Al-Mulk, with particular reference to the pagans of Makkah. The present Sūrah deals with the truth of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ claim, and gives sound and solid proof of it. Thus it rebuts the criticisms and taunts of the pagans against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Their first criticism was that he is [God forbid!] insane whereas he was perfectly sane person, an embodiment of knowledge and a paragon of virtues. Another reason why they probably called him insane is that whenever an installment of revelation descended upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ, a physical change came over him. For instance the

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(3). According to the explanation given to this verse by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi, 'Favour from His Lord' means the acceptance of his repentance, and 'wilderness' refers to the place where he was thrown by the fish. If this verse is read in juxtaposition with Verses 143,144 of Sūrah As-Ṣaffāt, the sense appears to be that if Yūnus عليه السلام had not offered *tasbiḥ* and *taubah,* he would have remained in the belly of the fish for good, and if he had repented, but was not favoured by Allah with the acceptance of his *taubah,* he would have been cast by the fish into the wilderness, due to his repentance, but in a reproachable state. However, since Allah favoured him with accepting his *taubah,* he was no more reproachable. Some other scholars, however, suggest that 'wilderness' in this verse refers to the plain of Ḥashr, and the verse means that if Allah had not accepted his *taubah,* he would have been cast into the plain of Hashr in a reproachable state.

(4). It means that they glare at you with such a hatred and anger as if they were to make you slip from your standpoint due to their aversion.

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colour of his face would change and become red, or he would sometimes snore or he would at other times appear to be in grief, or there were times when he would hang his head down. When any of these states was over, he would recite the revealed verses to the people. This matter was beyond the understanding and perception of the pagans. Therefore, they regarded this experience of receiving revelation as insanity. Or they called him insane presumably because he put forward to his people and to the whole world that there is no object worthy of worship except Allah. He put it to them that their self-carved idols cannot be gods because they are insensate and lacking knowledge; and they lack the ability to benefit or harm anyone. His voice of Truth sounded alone yet with this lone voice of Truth without any apparent means and support, he stood unwaveringly against the whole world. People without any insight or foresight did not think that it was possible for him to achieve his goal and they called it insanity. Some called him insane for the sake of calling him insane, without any reason. Having no excuse to refute the teachings of Allah's Messenger, all the pagans could do was to dub him insane. The initial verses of Sūrah Al-Qalam refute under emphatic oath their false charges.

نٓ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُوْنَ. مَآ اَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُوْنٍ (Nūn, by the pen and what they write, with the grace of your Lord, you are not insane....68:2). The letter Nūn is one of the isolated letters that have been revealed at the beginning of many Sūrahs. They are the secret signs and symbols and mysteries of Allah. Allah alone knows their hidden meaning, or Allah made their mysterious meanings known to His Messenger. The Ummah is not permitted to investigate the hidden meaning of such isolated letters.

Pen and its Significance

In the phrase *wal-qalami,* the *waw* is the particle of oath [translated here as 'by the pen']. 'Qalam' refers to 'pen', and there are three types of pen: [1] the pen of destinies; [2] the pen of angels; and [3] the pen of human beings. It could refer to any or all of these types of pen. A pen is an object that is used for writing anything [as is the view of Abū Ḥātim Al-Bustī]. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, it specifically refers to the pen of destinies. Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit ﷺ narrates regarding the pen of destinies that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The first thing Allah created was the pen, and He told it to write, and when it asked Him what it should write, He told it to write what was predestined, so it wrote

what would take place to all eternity." [Transmitted by At-Tirmidhī, saying that this is a Tradition whose chain of narrators is *gharīb*]. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Allah recorded the destiny of all creatures 50000 years before creating the heavens and the earth." [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]. Qatādah رحمه الله تعالى says that pen is a great gift of Allah that He has endowed upon His servants. Some scholars say that Allah first created the pen, and that was the pen of decrees which recorded the destinies of the entire universe and all the creatures. Then He created the second pen that is used by the inhabitants of the earth. The second pen is referred to in Sūrah Iqra' in verse [96:4], thus: عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ '{He who} taught by the pen'. And Allah knows best!

If *qalam* 'pen' in the verse under comment refers to the pen of destinies, its greatness and its superiority over everything is quite obvious and swearing by it is quite understandable. If it is taken to refer to all pens in general, including the pen of destinies, the pen of angels, and also the pen of human beings, swearing an oath by it is apt because all great tasks are accomplished by pen. In the conquests of territories, pen play a mighty role: 'The pen is mightier than the sword' goes the famous saying. Abū Ḥātim Al-Bustī has encapsulated this idea in two short verses:

اذا اقسم الابطال يوما بسيفهم .... وَعدّوه ممّا يكسب المجد وَالْكرم

When the brave people swear by their sword some day,
And count it among things that give honour and veneration to men,

كفٰى قلم الكتاب عزّا ورفعة..........مدى الدّهر انّ اللّٰه اقسم بالقلم

The writers' pen is sufficient for their honour and superiority
For all times to come, because Allah has sworn oath by the pen

In any case, it is immaterial whether the pen in the verse refers to the pen of destinies or it refers to the pen of creation in general. Then it swears an oath by مَا يَسْطُرُوْنَ 'what they write [1]'.

In other words, swearing an oath by what the pens have written or what they will record in the future, Allah refutes the unbelievers' false charge of madness that they made against the Holy Prophet ﷺ, thus:

مَا اَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّکَ بِمَجْنُوْنٍ (with the grace of your Lord, you are not insane....68:2). The verse contains the phrase بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّکَ (with the grace of your Lord....68:2). It states not only the claim, but also evidence to support

and substantiate the statement of claim. [See special note below.] Man is required to turn the pages of history, and he will realize that a person as great as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, upon whom Allah has conferred great blessings and grace, cannot be insane. Calling such a sane person insane is itself insanity

Special Note

Scholars have explained the Qur'ānic concept of 'oath': Wherever Allah has sworn an oath by an object or a phenomenon, its subject has been cited as evidence or testimony to support and substantiate the claim. Here the phrase مَا يَسْطُرُوْنَ 'what they write [1]'. Is the proof of the claim, that is, world history has been cited as testimony for critics to look into the pages of history, if they can ever find a person of such lofty calibre as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with high morals insane. He takes care of other people's sanity. The next verse reinforces the subject.

وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُوْنٍ (And you will definitely have a reward that will never end....68:3). The verse exposes the absurdity of the charge of madness. It purports to say that the actions of a madman produce no useful result, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ will eminently succeed in fulfilling the object of his Divine mission, and in bringing about a wonderful revolution in the lives of his degenerate and demented people. This is the significance of the words in the verse 'and for you is a reward that will never end.' No insane person is ever rewarded for his actions. The next verse constitutes a further eloquent comment on the charge of insanity imputed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ , thus:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى خُلُقٍ عَظِيْمٍ (And you are surely on exalted quality of character.....68:4). In this verse, the demented people are invited to think carefully about the lofty morals of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ Exalted Quality of Character

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما has said that 'exalted quality of character' signifies a 'great religion, and it is Islam, a religion dearest to Allah'. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنها was asked about the Holy Prophet's ﷺ character. She replied: "The Holy Prophet's ﷺ character was the Qur'ān itself". In other words, he is the living example of the Qur'ān that teaches high morals. Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه said that 'exalted quality of character' signifies the 'good manners which the Qur'ān has taught'. All these

interpretations have almost the same significance. That is to say, not only that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not an insane person, but he is the sublime and noblest of men possessing in full measure all the moral excellence that combine to make their possessor a perfect image of his Creator. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ humanity was of the most perfect character. He was a complete embodiment of all good moral qualities that a man is capable of possessing. The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself said:

بعثت لاتمم مكارم الاخلاق

> "I have only been sent to perfect noble character/conduct." [Abū Ḥayyān].

Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه said:

> "I served Allah's Messenger for ten years, and he never said a word of displeasure to me, nor did he ever say to me concerning something I had done: 'Why did you do that?' And he never said to me concerning what I had not done: 'Why did you not do this?'" [Bukhārī and Muslim].

Obviously, a ten-year period is a long time during which some unpleasant or objectionable thing might have happened.

Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه said:

> "As a result of the Holy Prophet's رضي الله عنه noble character, any slave-girl of Madīnah would hold his hand and take him wherever she would like to."

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها said: "Allah's Messenger never struck anyone with his hands except when he was fighting in *jihād* in the cause of Allah." It is confirmed that when he fought *jihād* in the cause of Allah, he killed unbelievers. Otherwise he did not hit any servant, nor any woman. He would never take revenge for any harm or mistake done. He would only implement *Shar'ī* punishment on those who violated Allah's laws. [Transmitted by Muslim].

Sayyidnā Jābir رضي الله عنه says that the Messenger of Allah was never asked for anything for which he said 'No'. [Bukhārī and Muslim].

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها said:

> "Allah's Messenger was never vulgar, never pretended to be vulgar and he never shouted in the marketplaces. He never

responded to evil by evil, but always pardoned and overlooked."

Sayyidnā Abū-ḍ-Dardā' ﷺ narrates that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

> "Noble character will be the heaviest thing on a Muslim's scale of good deeds on the Day of Resurrection. Allah detests the rude and foul-mouthed person." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī, grading it as a Tradition which is '*ḥasan*'].

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا narrates that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

> "Indeed by virtue of good character, a believer can attain the status of votaries who spend their nights in worship and their days in fasting." [Abū Dāwūd].

Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal ﷺ narrates that when he placed his foot into the stirrup of his mount, as he was departing for Yemen as the governor of that province, Allah's Messenger ﷺ advised him:

يَا مَعَاذ اَحسِنْ خُلُقَكَ لِلنَّاسِ

> "O Mu'ādh, display your best character with people." [Transmitted by Mālik].

All narratives cited here have been adopted from Tafsīr Maẓharī.

فَسَتُبْصِرُ وَيُبْصِرُوْنَ. بِاَيِّكُمُ الْمَفْتُوْنَ (So, you will see, and they will see which of you is demented....68:5-6]. The word *maftūn*, in this context, means 'demented'. In the preceding verses, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was accused of being an insane and demented. This verse turns tables upon the accusers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and making a prophecy, tells them in challenging words that time will show whether it was he or they who suffered from insanity, or whether his claim to be Allah's Messenger was the outpouring of heated brain, or whether they themselves were so demented as not to read the signs of time, and thus refuse to believe in him. These were the unfortunate, wretched ones who did not see the light of Truth and were thus disgraced and defeated in this world. But, on the other hand, there were thousands of other lucky ones who, at first did not see the light of Truth and denounced him as demented, soon saw the light and embraced the Faith of Islam. They took the love and obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as the capital asset of success, prosperity and happiness.

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ . وَدُّوْا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُوْنَ (So, do not obey those who reject [the true faith]. They wish that you become flexible [in your faith], and they

will become flexible [in their hostile attitude.]....68:8-9]. The interpretation of this verse as adopted in this translation is based on the interpretation of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ as reported by Qurṭubī.

Ruling

This verse indicates that any such compromise with the unbelievers is tantamount to *mudāhanah fid-dīn*, flexibility in religion, and this is forbidden. [Maẓharī]. Such a pact of leniency in matters of religion is not permissible, unless compelled by necessity.

وَلَا تُطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾ هَمَّازٍ مَّشَّآءٍ بِنَمِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾ مَّنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ اَثِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾ عُتُلٍّ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ زَنِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾

(And do not obey any contemptible one who swears much, a slanderer who goes about with calumnies, one who prevents good, [and who is] transgressor, sinful, harsh, [and] after all that, notorious,....68:10-13)

The word *zanīm* refers to 'a person whose legitimate birth from a father is not proved'. The person referred to in this verse was of doubtful birth or his lineage was uncertain.

The preceding verse prohibited any compromise with the unbelievers in general in matters of religion. The current verse prohibits specifically yielding to such mean leader of falsehood as Walīd Ibn Mughīrah, who possessed the base characteristics as listed in verses [10] to [13], the worst mischief-maker. [As transmitted by Ibn Jarīr on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. Having described this person's bad manners and his arrogance in several verses that follow, verse [16] says:

سَنَسِمُهٗ عَلَى الْخُرْطُوْمِ (We will soon brand him on the snout...68:16). That is, as, disbelievers, out of pride and false sense of power rejected the Divine Message in this world, Allah will disgrace and humiliate them on the Day of Resurrection so that the earlier and later generations will be able to see it. His nose has been described by way of reproach as *khurṭūm* (snout). This refers specifically to the long nose of a pig or a trunk of an elephant.

اِنَّا بَلَوْنٰهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَآ اَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ (We have tested them as We had tested the Owners of the Garden....68:17). The preceding verses rebutted the criticisms of pagan Arabs levelled against Allah's Messenger ﷺ and gave reasons why the charges are not only unfounded, but also absurd. The

present set of verses mentions a story of the past and the unbelievers of Makkah are threatened with punishment. 'Testing them' could refer to the forthcoming story, in which the owners of a garden were blessed with Divine favours, but they behaved ungratefully. As a result, a punishment came upon them and the favours were destroyed. The greatest Divine favour upon the Makkans was the advent of the Holy Messenger ﷺ. Besides, their businesses flourished and they prospered. This was a test for them to see whether they would behave gratefully to Allah and believe in Him and in His Messenger ﷺ, or whether they would obstinately persist in disbelief. In the other case, they should draw lessons from the story of the owners of the orchard, lest they be visited by a similar punishment on account of ingratitude. This interpretation would apply even in the case where these verses are taken as Makkī, but most commentators take them to be Madanī. The 'test' referred to here is the terrible famine that held Makkah in its grip, as a result of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prayer against them, for several years during which time people died of hunger and starvation, they were forced to eat carrion and leaves of trees till the Makkans begged the Holy Prophet ﷺ to pray for their deliverance from the scourge. This incident took place after the migration.

The Story of the Owners of a Garden

Some elders, such as Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, mentioned that this orchard was in Yemen. According to one version of Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair's narration, it was about six miles away from Ṣan'ā', the famous capital city of Yemen. Other scholars think that it was in Ethiopia [formerly known as Abyssinia] [Ibn Kathīr]. They were from amongst the People of the Book. This incident took place a while after the Ascension of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام. [Qurṭubī].

They are referred to as the 'Owners of the Garden' in the above verse. The description of the story given in the verses indicates that they did not only have a garden, but they also had large tracts of land which they cultivated and had fields of crops. Possibly, side by side with the orchard there were tracts of cultivated land and fields of crops in between the trees. However, they were called the owners of the garden on account of the popularity of the garden. The incident is reported according to the narration of Muḥammad Ibn Marwān on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn

'Abbās ﷺ as follows: There was a garden about two *farsakhs* (six miles) away from Ṣan'ā' of Yemen. Its name was *Ḍarawān*. This garden was set up by a pious and righteous person. His practice was to pick the fruits or harvest the crops with sickle. He would give some of the crop to the poor and indigent who gathered grains for themselves and did their living.

Likewise, when the crop was thrashed, and the grain separated from the chaff, he would leave the grain for the poor. So also when fruits were picked from the trees of the orchard, some fruits would fall down, and he would leave them for the indigent. For this reason, the poor always gathered at the orchard at the time of picking the fruit, and separating the grain from the chaff. When the righteous person passed away, he had three sons who inherited the orchard and crop-fields. They held a family meeting and discussed that their family has grown large, and the produce of the orchard and land is not sufficient for them. Therefore, it is no longer possible for them to spare any fruit or grain for the poor. According to other narratives, these boys, like other youngsters, felt that their father was a fool to give so much of fruits and grains to them. They thought it was necessary to put a stop to this. The rest of the story is told in the following verses of the Qur'ān.

إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ. وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُونَ (...when they had sworn an oath that they would pluck its fruits on the next morning, and did not make any exception (by saying *'inshā'allah'*).... 68:17-18). In other words, they swore that they would harvest very early in the morning and return with it before the throng of poor people could arrive at the garden. They had so much of confidence in their plan that they did not say the redeeming words 'If Allah wills' whereas it is *sunnah* to say *'inshā'allah'* when one mentions that one will do a particular work tomorrow.

وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُونَ (and did not make any exception (by saying *'inshā'allah'*). [68:18]'. The word *isthisnā'* in the original Arabic means 'to make an exception by saying "*inshā'allah*"'. However, some scholars interpret this word, in this context, to mean that 'they would devour the entire harvest themselves, with no exception for the poor. [Maẓharī].

فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ (Then, there whirled around it a whirl (of calamity) from your Lord, while they were asleep.....68:19). The word 'whirl' refers to 'a whirl of calamity' as a result of which Divine

punishment overtook the garden in a sudden and swift sweep. Some narratives report that it was a fire which burnt every standing crop, and reduced it to black ashes.

وَهُمْ نَآئِمُوْنَ (...while they were asleep.... 68:19). In other words, the devastating disaster overtook the entire garden while its owners were asleep.

فَاَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيْمِ (Thus, on the next morning, it was like a harvested field.....68:20). The word *ṣarm* means 'to harvest or to collect a crop from the fields'. The word *ṣarīm* in the context of the verse is used in the sense of *masrūm* or *maqṭū'*, meaning 'harvested or cut'. This signifies that the fire burnt the field and stripped it bare. The word *ṣarīm* also means 'night'. From this point of view, the verse signifies 'the field became burnt up and black like night'. [Maẓharī].

فَتَنَادَوْا مُصْبِحِيْنَ (So, they called out each other as the morning broke 68:21). This means that they starting waking up each other in the early morning that they should set out early if they wanted to harvest.

وَهُمْ يَتَخَافَتُوْنَ (...while they were whispering to each other ... 68:23). They were speaking in a low voice, lest a poor man should hear their talk and accompany them.

وَّغَدَوْا عَلٰى حَرْدٍ قٰدِرِيْنَ And in early hours of the day they rushed quickly, while they were (assuming themselves) powerful (to pluck the fruits and prevent the poor.) [68:25]'. The word *ḥard* means 'to prevent' and 'to express anger'.[5] In other words, they thought they had the power to pick the fruit for themselves and prevent the poor people from having a share in it, and even if they do come to the garden, the owners of the garden decided to chase them out.

فَلَمَّا رَاَوْهَا قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا لَضَآلُّوْنَ (But when they saw it [the place of the ruined garden], they said, "We have missed the way."....68:26). In other words, when they did not find their garden on that spot, they first thought that they must have lost their way and gone to the wrong place. But when they saw the surroundings, they realized that it was the right place they have gone to, but the garden had been burnt up and destroyed. So, they

(5). This word also means 'to rush quickly'. This meaning of the word has been adopted in the translation of the text. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

exclaimed: بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُوْمُوْنَ "No, but we are deprived [of the fruits]....68:27)

قَالَ اَوْسَطُهُمْ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُوْنَ (Said he who was the best among them, "Did I not say to you, 'Why do you not pronounce *tasbīḥ* (Allah's purity)?"....68:28). The middle brother was the best of them. He was righteous like his father. It used to please him to spend in the cause of Allah. He was not niggardly or stingy like the other brothers. He had advised them to recite *tasbīḥ* which, literally, means to pronounce Allah's purity. He told them that they were withholding the share of the poor with the fear that their fruit will be depleted and will not be replenished by Allah, if they gave the poor their share. He told them that Allah is pure from such pettiness. Instead, those who spend in the way of Allah, He will not only make their wealth full again or replace what they have spent, but also will give them over and above what they have spent. [Maẓharī].

قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ (They said, "We pronounce the purity of our Lord. No doubt, we were wrongdoers."..... 68:29). Neither of the brothers had paid heed to this brother's advice at that point. But when the damage was done, they admitted that Allah is Pure, Free from any qualities of weaknesses and shortcomings, and that they were the wrongdoers, in that they were unjust to the poor intending to deprive them of their share and devour it themselves.

Warning

Although the best of the three brothers offered the right advice, he joined the other brothers in following their wrong opinion. So he suffered the same loss. This indicates that anyone who prevents other people from committing sins but does not abstain from them himself and joins them in doing the wrong acts, he will suffer the same fate as the others.

فَاَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ يَّتَلَاوَمُوْنَ (Then, (at the beginning,) they started reproaching one another;...... 68:30). That is to say, at the beginning they made admission of guilt, but then they turned to face each other in mutual accusation, blaming each other for the punishment that visited them, whereas the crime was not committed by only a single person from among them, but it was committed jointly by all or most of them.

A note of caution

A common misdeed, in our days, is that when a calamity befalls a

group of people due to their collective conduct, an additional scourge that befalls them is that, (instead of reforming themselves,) they start wasting their time in accusing each other.

قَالُوْا يٰوَيْلَنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا طٰغِيْنَ ([and at last,] they said, "Woe to us! In fact, we [all] were outrageous....68:31). At the beginning, they accused one another of the sin. Then when they considered the matter carefully, they admitted that they were all on the wrong. As a result, they lamented and admitted their guilt that amounted to repentance. On the basis of this repentance they hoped that Allah will give them in exchange a garden better than the one destroyed.

Imām Baghawī reports from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ that, according to his information, when these brothers repented truly, Allah blessed them with a better vineyard that bore such large bunches of grapes that a single bunch could be loaded on a mule. [Maẓharī].

كَذٰلِكَ الْعَذَابُ (In this way the punishment comes. And, of course, the punishment of the Hereafter is even greater, if they but realize!....68:33). After a brief reference to the famine faced by the Makkans and a detailed account of the People of the Garden whose garden was burnt as a punishment, the present verse sets down a general rule. When a Divine punishment visits, it visits in this way, and this kind of punishment in the mortal world does not serve as an expiation for the punishment in the Hereafter. The punishment of the Hereafter is greater and more severe.

The following verses give a description of the reward of the righteous, followed by refutation of another false claim of the pagans of Makkah. They denied that Resurrection will ever occur. They thought the story of Resurrection and accountability is fiction. Even if that does happen, they thought, they will get the same type of blessings and wealth as they have in this world. Several verses respond to their false belief. In verse [35] Allah poses the rhetorical question to the disbelievers: 'Shall We make the obedient like the sinners? [35] This is a strange sort of assertion for which they have no authority, nor proof nor any celestial book. Nor is there any promise from Allah that they will get the same type of blessings.

A Rational Proof of Resurrection

These verses give a solid proof to the necessity of the Day of Judgement, because accountability, rewarding the righteous and

punishing the evil are all rationally necessary. It is witnessed by every person in this mortal world, and no one can deny, that the wicked, the evil, the unjust, the thieves and the bandits generally lead a comfortable and enjoyable life in the mortal world. A thief or a bandit sometimes in one night gains so much of wealth that a righteous person might not gain as much in his entire life. The former has no fear of Allah or the Hereafter, nor does he have any sense of shame. He fulfills his selfish desires as he likes - by hook or by crook. The latter fears Allah, and if he does not have that, his sense of shame among his brotherhood overwhelms him. In short, in the mortal world the wicked and the evil ones seem to be successful, and the good people seem to be unsuccessful. If there does not arise an occasion where fair play and justice is established - where the good people would be rewarded and the evil ones would be punished? It would be meaningless to refer to evil as evil. There would be no reason to stop a person from fulfilling his selfish desires and doing the evil acts. On the other hand, justice will have no meaning or significance. How will the believers in God's existence respond to the following question: Where is God's justice?

One may argue that a criminal is apprehended, he is exposed to disgrace and is punished. This distinguishes the innocent persons from the evil ones right here in this world. Laws and statutes of a governments establish standards of justice and fair play. But this is incorrect, because it is not possible for a government to keep an eye on every one, everywhere and in all circumstances. Wherever it does happen, it is not an easy task to gather the necessary judicial evidence, so that the guilty person may be convicted and punished. And even if the judicial evidence could be gathered, there are several escape doors through which the guilty person could get away, such as force, bribery, intercession and pressure. If we review the punishment history of the present-day governments and courts, it would appear that nowadays only those people are punished who are fools, brainless and helpless or without support. They are not cunning enough to find a loophole in the legal system, or an escape route, nor do they have enough money to pay for bribery, nor do they have an influential person to back them or intercede on their behalf or they cannot use these things because of their foolishness. The rest of the criminals are moving freely.

This verse: اَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ كَالْمُجْرِمِيْنَ (Otherwise, shall We make the obedient like the sinners?... 68:35). Clarifies that it is rationally necessary that there should come a time when people will have to give account of their deeds, a place where the guilty ones will find no escape routes, an ideal world where there will be absolute justice and fair play, where good and evil will be clearly distinguished. If this is not the state of affairs in the Hereafter, then no evil should be evil, and no sin should be sin in this mortal world. Divine justice would thus be rendered meaningless.

Since it is established that Resurrection is a reality and inevitable, the reward of good deeds is a reality and the punishment of evil deeds is a reality, the verses that follow describe the horrors of the Day of Judgement and the punishment of the evil ones, including the description of the exposure of the Shin [*kashf-us-sāq*] in Verse 42 (the explanation of which may be seen in the foot-note given in the translation of that verse.)

فَذَرْنِىْ وَمَنْ يُّكَذِّبُ بِهٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ (So, leave Me alone with those who reject this discourse. We will draw them on little by little (towards Hell) from a way they do not know.... 68:44). Here the phrase 'So, leave me alone' in the original Arabic is an idiomatic expression which signifies 'Rely on Allah'. The disbelievers often demanded Divine punishment arguing that if they are really guilty in the sight of Allah, and if He has the power to punish, then why the punishment does not befall them forthwith. These were heart-rending demands on account of which the thought probably must have crossed the mind of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and he might have prayed to Allah to punish them sometime, in the hope that the rest of the people might draw lessons and amend their conduct. On that occasion, Allah revealed [in verse, 45] that He is the best aware of the wisdom behind His decisions. He does not punish them immediately, but He gives them respite to test them and to give them an opportunity to believe.

Towards the end, the story of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام is concisely told that when his people constantly demanded punishment, he became indignant and prayed for the punishment to be sent down. The signs of the punishment started appearing. Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام left the place and transferred himself elsewhere. In the meantime the entire nation wept, wailed, sincerely repented and begged refuge from the Divine punishment. Allah pardoned them and took away the punishment. Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام felt embarrassed and thought that if he goes back

to his people, they might think he was a liar. As a result, without the clear permission of Allah, he acted purely on his *ijtihād* [independent judgement] that he would not go back to his people. At this, Allah, in order to caution him, created a situation where he had to undertake sea voyage, and then was lowered into the sea where he was swallowed up by a fish. Being thus cautioned, Sayyidnā Yūnus ﷺ sought the Divine pardon. Consequently, Allah once again opened the doors of the former blessings to be restored to him. Full description of the event has been given in Sūrah Yūnus (Verse 10:98) and other Sūrahs. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is comforted by this story not to be impressed by people's demands nor to be anxious to get them punished hastily. Allah's wisdom is profound and unfathomable. Allah alone knows what is in the best interests of the world. Allah should be trusted and relied on.

وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوْتِ (So, remain patient with your Lord's judgment, and be not like the Man of the Fish...68:48). It refers to Sayyidnā Yūnus ﷺ He is named here as 'Man of Fish' because he was devoured by a fish and remained in its belly for some time.

وَاِنْ يَّكَادُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَيُزْلِقُوْنَكَ بِاَبْصَارِهِمْ (And indeed the disbelievers seem to trip you up with their glances when they hear the Reminder, and say, "He is a madman indeed.....68:51). The verb '*layuzliqūnaka*' is derived from *izlāq* which means 'to trip up or to cause someone to fall or make a mistake' [*Rāghib*]. The verse says to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that disbelievers cast angry looks at him that they might frighten him into giving up his mission or intimidate him into yielding to their pressure tactics. When they listen to Divine words, they call him a madman. But far from it, his teaching contains the quintessence of wisdom - the Qur'ān puts it thus:

وَمَا هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ (And it is nothing else but a Reminder for all the worlds.... 68:52). Divine words are a Reminder and an admonition for the entire universe. The Reminder will lift the people from the lowest depths of degradation to the highest summits of greatness and glory. It would also cleanse them and free them from moral blemishes and raise their spiritual stature. Is it possible for an insane person to receive and deliver such a Sublime Divine Message? Can a Prophet of such a high caliber be called a madman? The earlier verses of this Sūrah rebutted the charge of insanity against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Towards the end of the Sūrah, the same charge of lunacy is rebutted again in a different style.

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى and some other commentators have reported another event as background of this verse. The evil eye is a reality which causes loss, illness and destruction. Authentic Traditions report that it is a reality. The Arabs also believed that an evil eye is a reality. There was a person famous in Arabia to cast an evil eye on camels or animals to cause instant death or destruction. The pagans of Arabia were enemies of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and in every possible way they were after persecuting him and killing him. They left no stone unturned in harming him. They even contemplated afflicting him with an evil eye. They therefore decided to secure the services of the particular person who could effectively cast an evil eye. He was instructed to cast the evil eye on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ so that he would become ill. He exerted himself to the utmost, but to no avail. Allah protected him and he was unaffected. The verses were revealed in connection with this incident.

Special Note

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī reports that if anyone is affected by the evil eye, these verses (51 & 52) may be recited and blown on the person: the ill effect will be dispelled.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qalam
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ḥāqqah

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 52 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 52

اَلْحَاۤقَّةُ ﴿١﴾ مَا الْحَاۤقَّةُ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَاۤ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْحَاۤقَّةُ ﴿٣﴾ كَذَّبَتْ
ثَمُوْدُ وَعَادٌۢ بِالْقَارِعَةِ ﴿٤﴾ فَاَمَّا ثَمُوْدُ فَاُهْلِكُوْا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ ﴿٥﴾ وَاَمَّا
عَادٌ فَاُهْلِكُوْا بِرِيْحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ ﴿٦﴾ سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ
وَّثَمٰنِيَةَ اَيَّامٍ ۙ حُسُوْمًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيْهَا صَرْعٰى ۙ كَاَنَّهُمْ اَعْجَازُ
نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾ فَهَلْ تَرٰى لَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَاقِيَةٍ ﴿٨﴾ وَجَآءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَنْ
قَبْلَهٗ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكٰتُ بِالْخَاطِئَةِ ﴿٩﴾ فَعَصَوْا رَسُوْلَ رَبِّهِمْ فَاَخَذَهُمْ
اَخْذَةً رَّابِيَةً ﴿١٠﴾ اِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَا الْمَآءُ حَمَلْنٰكُمْ فِى الْجَارِيَةِ ﴿١١﴾
لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَّتَعِيَهَاۤ اُذُنٌ وَّاعِيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فَاِذَا نُفِخَ فِى الصُّوْرِ
نَفْخَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾ وَّحُمِلَتِ الْاَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَّاحِدَةً
﴿١٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ وَّقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١٥﴾ وَانْشَقَّتِ السَّمَآءُ فَهِىَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
وَّاهِيَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾ وَّالْمَلَكُ عَلٰۤى اَرْجَآئِهَا ۭ وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ
يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمٰنِيَةٌ ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُوْنَ لَا تَخْفٰى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ ﴿١٨﴾
فَاَمَّا مَنْ اُوْتِىَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ فَيَقُوْلُ هَآؤُمُ اقْرَءُوْا كِتٰبِيَهْ ﴿١٩﴾ اِنِّىْ

ظَنَنْتُ اَنِّيْ مُلٰقٍ حِسَابِيَهْ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَهُوَ فِيْ عِيْشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فِيْ جَنَّةٍ
عَالِيَةٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُطُوْفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا هَنِيْٓـًٔا بِمَآ اَسْلَفْتُمْ
فِي الْاَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْ اُوْتِيَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِشِمَالِهٖ فَيَقُوْلُ
يٰلَيْتَنِيْ لَمْ اُوْتَ كِتٰبِيَهْ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَمْ اَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَهْ ﴿٢٦﴾ يٰلَيْتَهَا كَانَتِ
الْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنِّيْ مَالِيَهْ ﴿٢٨﴾ هَلَكَ عَنِّيْ سُلْطٰنِيَهْ ﴿٢٩﴾
خُذُوْهُ فَغُلُّوْهُ ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ الْجَحِيْمَ صَلُّوْهُ ﴿٣١﴾ ثُمَّ فِيْ سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا
سَبْعُوْنَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوْهُ ﴿٣٢﴾ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٣٣﴾
وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلٰى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِيْنِ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هٰهُنَا حَمِيْمٌ
﴿٣٥﴾ وَّلَا طَعَامٌ اِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِيْنٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ لَّا يَاْكُلُهٗٓ اِلَّا الْخٰطِئُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾
فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّهٗ لَقَوْلُ
رَسُوْلٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَّمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ ۭ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَ
لَا بِقَوْلِ كَاهِنٍ ۭ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ
﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْاَقَاوِيْلِ ﴿٤٤﴾ لَاَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِيْنِ
﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ اَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حٰجِزِيْنَ
﴿٤٧﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَتَذْكِرَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَاِنَّا لَنَعْلَمُ اَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُّكَذِّبِيْنَ
﴿٤٩﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِيْنِ ﴿٥١﴾
فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٥٢﴾

The Imminent Happening! [1] **What is the Imminent Happening?** [2] **And what can let you know what the Imminent happening is?** [3] **Thamūd and 'Ād had denied (the happening of) the Shocking Event (the Day of Judgment).** [4] **As for Thamūd, they were destroyed by that (dreadful cry) which exceeded all limits.** [5] **And as for 'Ād, they were destroyed by a violent windstorm** [6] **that He imposed on them for seven nights and eight consecutive days, so you could see them thrown on the**

ground, as if they were trunks of hollow palm-trees. [7] So, do you see any remnant of them? [8] And Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and those before him and the overthrown towns came up with evil. [9] And they disobeyed the messenger of their Lord, so He seized them with an extremely severe seizure. [10] When the water overflowed (in the Deluge of Nūḥ ﷺ), We let you (O mankind,) board the floating ship, [11] so that We make it for you a reminder, and so that a preserving ear may preserve it. [12] Then, when the Trumpet will be blown for the first time, [13] and the earth and the mountains will be lifted and crushed into pieces with a single blow, [14] then on that Day the Happening will happen, [15] and the sky will burst apart, while it will have become frail on that day. [16] And the angels will be on its borders. And on that Day, the Throne of your Lord will be carried above them by eight (angels). [17] On that day, you will be brought forward in a way that no secret of yours will remain secret. [18] Now, as for him who is given his book in his right hand, he will say (to his colleagues), "Come here, read my book. [19] I was sure that I would encounter my reckoning." [20] So he will be in a well-pleasing life [21] in a lofty garden, [22] the fruits of which will be close at hand. [23] (It will be said to such people,) "Eat and drink with pleasure, as a reward for what you did in advance during past days." [24] As for him who will be given his book in his left hand, he will say, " Oh, would that I had not been given my book, [25] and I had never known what my account is! [26] Oh, would that it (death) had been the end of the matter! [27] My wealth has not been of any use to me. [28] My power has gone from me for good." [29] (Then it will be said to angels,) "Seize him, then put a collar around his neck, [30] then, in the blazing fire let him burn. [31] Thereafter, fasten him with a chain the measure of which is seventy hands." [32] Indeed, he did not believe in Almighty Allah, [33] and did not persuade (others) to feed the needy. [34] So, he has no friend here today, [35] nor any food except from that which flows from wounds when washing, [36] which is eaten by none but the sinners. [37]

I swear by what you see, [38] and what you do not see, [39] it is surely the speech of a noble Messenger, (that he conveys from Allah). [40] and it is not the speech of a poet, (but) little you believe, [41] nor is it the speech of a soothsayer, (but) little you heed to the advice. [42] It is

a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. [43] **And had he forged some statements in Our name,** [44] **We would have certainly seized him by the right hand,** [45] **and then severed his life-artery,** [46] **so no one from you would have been an impediment against it.** [47] **And it is a Reminder for the God-fearing.** [48] **And, of course, We know that among you there are deniers.** [49] **And surely, it is an anguish for the disbelievers.** [50] **And it is surely an absolute truth.** [51] **So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord.** [52]

Commentary

This Sūrah is almost wholly devoted to the subject of inevitability of the Resurrection, its horrors, the punishment of unbelievers and the reward of believers. The Day of Judgement is variously referred to in the Qur'ān, and in this Sūrah we encounter the following three names: اَلْحَاقَّةُ Al-Ḥāqqah 'Imminent Happening', اَلْقَارِعَةُ *Al-Qāri'ah* 'Shocking Event' and اَلْوَاقِعَةُ *Al-Wāqi'ah* 'Happening'.

The word اَلْحَاقَّةُ *Al-ḥāqqah* means an 'established fact, or inevitable event, reality or truth'. The word *Al-ḥāqqah* also means 'Something that provide evidence that something is true.' It can be applied to the Day of Judgement in both senses of the word, because in the first sense the Day of Judgement itself is an established truth, and its occurrence is a certainty. And in the other sense the Day of Judgement will prove to the believers the reality of Paradise and to the unbelievers the reality of Hell. This name of the Day of Judgement is followed by two questions regarding it. The questions have been put to make the readers realise how horrifying the experience would be - beyond normal experience or even imagination.

The word اَلْقَارِعَةُ *Al-Qāri'ah,* literally, means 'rumbling'. The Day of Judgement is so called because there will be rumbling sound which will cause agitation or terror in the hearts of people, and will dreadfully destroy the heavenly and earthly bodies and scatter them apart.

The word اَلطَّاغِيَةُ *Aṭ-Ṭāghiyah* is derived from *ṭughyān* which means 'to exceed the limit', signifying an extremely severe punishment, that is, 'it would be such high pitched sound which would exceed the limit of any of the sounds of the mortal world, and the human heart or brain would not be able to bear'. When Thamūd exceeded the limit in denying the Day of

Judgement, they were destroyed by that dreadful cry which exceeded all limits. It was a combination of most high pitched sound of thunderbolt together with a flash of lightning that struck them which rent their hearts.

The phrase رِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ (*rīḥin ṣarṣarin*) (in verse 6) refers to a violent windstorm which is also severely cold.

سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَّثَمٰنِيَةَ اَيَّامٍ (seven nights and eight consecutive days'... 69:7). According to some of the narratives, the punishment of windstorm started on Wednesday morning, and lasted till the following Wednesday evening. In this way, it makes up eight days and seven nights.

The word *ḥusūman* (in verse 7) is the plural of *ḥāsim* and means 'cutting them off entirely' or 'causing them to perish completely'.

The word مُؤْتَفِكٰتِ *mu'tafikāt* (in verse 9) means 'adjacent to one another'. The towns of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, Sodom and Gomorrah, are so called because they were adjacent to each other or because when the punishment overtook the disbelievers and criminals overthrowing their towns], they were all jumbled up. [1]

فَاِذَا نُفِخَ فِى الصُّوْرِ نَفْخَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ (Then, when the Trumpet will be blown for the first time...69:13). Tirmidhī records a Ḥadīth on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه that *ṣūr* 'trumpet' is a horn- like object which will be blown on Doomsday.

نَفْخَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ ('for the first time...69:13). It means that it will be a sudden and a single continuing sound that will last until all die. The texts of Qur'ān and Sunnah show that the trumpet will be blown twice on the Day of Judgement. The first trumpet is called *nafkhat-uṣ-ṣa'aq* 'the trumpet of swoon', in connection with which the Qur'ān says:

فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ

> And all those in the heavens and all those in the earth will faint... [39:68]

With this trumpet all angels residing in the heavens and all Jinns and human beings and animals residing on earth will become unconscious

(1) Another possible meaning of *mu'tafikāt* is 'overthrown' as mentioned by several exegetes. The translation in the text is based on this meaning.
Muhammad Taqi Usmani

and fall to the ground. Whilst they are in the state of unconsciousness, they will die. The second trumpet is called *nafkhat-ul-ba'th* 'trumpet of Resurrection'. The word *ba'th* means 'to rise'. With this trumpet all the dead will rise from death and stand up. The Qur'ān describes this situation thus:

ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنظُرُونَ

> Thereafter, it will be blown once again, and suddenly they will stand up, looking around. [39:68]

In other words, then the trumpet will be blown a second time and at once they will be standing upright looking on.

According to some narratives, a third 'trumpet' will also be blown before the two trumpets, which is referred to as *nafkhat-ul-faza'* ('the trumpet of fright or panic). By a careful analysis of all the narratives and texts, it appears that the first trumpet in its initial stage is *nafkhat-ul-faza'* and in its final stage it will become *ṣa'aq* 'the trumpet of swoon or death'. [Maẓharī]

وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَٰنِيَةٌ (...And on that Day, the Throne of your Lord will be carried above them by eight [angels]....69:17). In other words, on the day of Judgement, eight angels will bear the Throne of the Raḥmān above their heads. According to some of the Prophetic narratives, before the Judgement Day this task will be carried out by four angels. On the Judgement Day, four more angels will be added to carry out the task.

As to what is the Throne of the Raḥmān, what is its reality, its form and shape, how the angels carry it - are transcendental matters and are all beyond human intellect. Allah is beyond time, space and matter, and therefore we are not permitted to pursue these matters pertaining to Him to determine its exact meaning. The noble Companions, their pupils and the righteous elders took the attitude that they simply believed in all transcendental matters and never questioned about them. Whatever Allah means by them is the Truth. Their nature and reality are unknown.

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَىٰ مِنكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ (On that day, you will be brought forward in a way that no secret of yours will remain secret...69:18). In other words, on the Day of Judgement people will be exposed - no concealed act they did will stay concealed. Nothing is concealed from Divine knowledge and

sight even today. The Plain of Gathering has been particularly mentioned in this connection probably because the entire ground will be levelled out as a plain surface. There will be no caves nor mountains, no buildings nor houses nor barriers of any trees. These are the things behind which people normally hide in the mortal world. On the Day of Judgement, none of these things will be available and there will be no possibility of hiding.

هَآؤُمُ اقْرَءُوْا كِتٰبِيَهْ (Come here, read my book... 69:19). The word *hā'umu,* literally means, "come" but, idiomatically, it is used in the sense of the plural imperative verb *khudhū* "take"'. In other words, one who is given his record book in his right hand, he will be elated and, looking at the people around him, will say 'Here, take my account book and read it!'

هَلَكَ عَنِّيْ سُلْطٰنِيَهْ (My power has gone from me for good...69:29). The word *sulṭān*, literally, yields the sense of 'power or overpowering'. Therefore, a government or state is referred to as *salṭanah* and a ruler is referred to as *sulṭān*. In other words, when people gain power and political ascendancy in the world, they become proud, hold sway over other people, perpetrate injustices and commit atrocities. But in the Hereafter all that will vanish and be lost, and the unjust and proud rulers will have no army to obey or support them. They will be miserable and helpless creatures who will not be able to defend themselves.

The word *sulṭān* also stands for 'authority, proof or argument' in which case it would mean : 'Today I have no argument in favour of protecting myself against punishment'.

خُذُوْهُ فَغُلُّوْهُ (Seize him, then put a collar around his neck... 69:30). This instruction will be given to the angels to seize the guilty one and truss him up by putting a collar around his neck - though, however, the wordings of the verse do not mention who will seize and who will truss him up. Narratives indicate that when this order will be issued, everything, like submissive and obedient servants, will rush to apprehend him.

ثُمَّ فِيْ سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُوْنَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوْهُ (Thereafter, make him enter into a chain, the measure of which is seventy hands....69:32). The phrase 'make him enter into a chain' could be interpreted metaphorically as 'bind him in a chain' but it could be taken in its primary sense, that is, to pierce the chain through one side of the body, so that it could come out from the

other side of it like a string is passed through a pearl or the bead of a rosary. Traditional narratives seem to support the primary sense. [Maẓharī]

فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هٰهُنَا حَمِيْمٌ ۙ وَّلَا طَعَامٌ اِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِيْنٍ (So, he has no friend here today, nor any food except from that which flows from wounds when washing...69:35-36]. The word *ḥamīm* means 'a sincere or bosom friend'. The word *ghislīn* with *'gh'* bearing the *kasrah* [= i] refers to the water with which the pus and blood of the wounds of the inmates of Hell will be washed. The verses signify that on the Day of Resurrection he will have no friend that will support him or save him from punishment, nor will he have anything to eat except the filthy water with which pus exuding from the wound of the inmates of Hell might have been washed. The words 'nor any food' mean that they will not have any delectable food to eat. This statement does not negate things like *ghislīn* which are distasteful and reprehensible. Therefore, it does not contradict another verse which states that the inmates of Hell will eat *zaqqūm*.

فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ. وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ (I swear by what you see, and what you do not see....69:38-39). This comprehends the entire body of creation. Some say 'what you do not see' refers to the Being of Allah Ta'ālā and His attributes. Others say 'what you see' refers to things of the mortal world, and 'what you do not see,' refers to things of the Hereafter. [Maẓharī] And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, Knows best!

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْاَقَاوِيْلِ ﴿٤٤﴾ لَاَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾

And had he forged some statements in Our name, We would have certainly seized him by the right hand, and then severed his life-artery,... (69:44-46)

The word *taqawwul* means 'to forge, fabricate or concoct' and the word *watīn* refers to 'aorta or life-artery'. This is the main artery that carries blood from the heart to other parts of the body. Once this artery is cut off, death occurs instantly.

The foregoing verses refute the outrageous thoughts of the disbelievers. They used to accuse the Prophet ﷺ of being a poet and a soothsayer. They said that the Qur'ān was the word of a poet or the word of a soothsayer. The Qur'ān denounces their argument - it is not the word

of a poet nor the word of a soothsayer; it is a revelation from Allah to His Messenger. In other words, in verses [37-38] it was claimed that all visible and invisible things prove that the Prophet ﷺ is Allah's true Messenger and that the Qur'ān is Allah's revealed Word and not the imaginary flight of a poet's mind or the wild conjectures of a diviner. In this and the preceding three verses another invincible argument is given in support of his claim. The argument is to the effect that if the Prophet ﷺ had been a forger of lies against Allah, Allah's strong hand would have seized him by the throat and cut off his life-artery and he would have certainly met with a violent death. The invincible argument is put forward in a strong language - assuming the impossible - to make the ignorant realise the worst-case scenario. The expression 'right hand' is used probably because when a convicted criminal is to be executed, the executioner stands in front facing the condemned person. The executioner's left hand faces the guilty person's right hand. The executioner holds the condemned person with his left hand and attacks him with his right hand.

A Cautionary Note

This verse refers to a theoretical situation relating to the Apostle of Allah ﷺ in particular that lest, God forbid, if he were to concoct a word and impute it to Allah, this is the way he would have been dealt with. A hypothetical situation is a possible situation, not an actual situation. Thus this does not necessarily set down a universal principle that any and every impostor, who lays claim to prophethood, would be destroyed as a matter of general rule. History records that many impostors laid claim to prophethood, but no such destructive punishment was ever imposed on them.

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ 'So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord. [69:52]'. It was shown in the preceding verses that Allah's Messenger never speak from his own whims and fancies. He only conveys pure revelation revealed to him by Allah. The Divine Word is a reminder and an admonition for the God-conscious people. Allah knows that despite knowing the absolutely incontestable truth many people will continue to reject it. Consequently, it will be a source of eternal remorse, disappointment and punishment in the Hereafter for the disbelievers. In the end, Allah says:

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ 'And it is surely an absolute truth. [69:51]'. In other words,

the Qur'ān is undeniably the Truth of Certainty. There is no room for any doubt or suspicion in it.

Finally, Allah addresses the Prophet ﷺ to say:

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّکَ الْعَظِيْمِ 'So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord.' [69:52]. This signifies that the Prophet ﷺ should not pay any heed to the criticisms of the obdurate disbelievers nor should he feel distressed. He should rather pronounce the purity of Allah's name. This will relieve his distress and grief. On another occasion, the Qur'ān says:

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّکَ يَضِيْقُ صَدْرُکَ بِمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّکَ وَکُنْ مِّنَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ 'And We know that your heart feels distressed for what they say. [15:97]. So, proclaim the purity, and glory of your Lord and be among those who prostrate. [98]' The Prophet ﷺ is advised not to pay any attention to the disbelievers talking nonsense. The best remedy for his distress and grief is to glorify Allah, praise Him and prostrate before Him.

Abū Dāwūd records a narration from Sayyidnā 'Uqbah bin Āmir Juhanī رضي الله عنه that when the verse. فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّکَ الْعَظِيْمِ 'So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord. [52]' was revealed, the Prophet ﷺ instructed this *tasbīḥ* to be reserved for the posture of *rukū'* and when the verse سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّکَ الْاَعْلٰى 'Pronounce the purity of the name of your most Exalted Lord. [87:1]' was revealed, he instructed this *tasbīḥ* to be reserved for the posture of *sajdah*. Therefore, by common consent of the *Ummah* these *tasbīḥāt* are recited in *rukū'* and sajdah respectively. According to overwhelming majority, it is *Sunnah* to recite them and repeat them thrice. Some scholars say it is obligatory.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥāqqah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij

(The Stairways)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 44 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 44

سَالَ سَآئِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَّاقِعٍ ﴿١﴾ لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ لَيْسَ لَهٗ دَافِعٌ ﴿٢﴾ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ
ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ ﴿٣﴾ تَعْرُجُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَالرُّوْحُ اِلَيْهِ فِيْ يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهٗ
خَمْسِيْنَ اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيْلًا ﴿٥﴾ اِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهٗ بَعِيْدًا
﴿٦﴾ وَّنَرٰىهُ قَرِيْبًا ﴿٧﴾ يَوْمَ تَكُوْنُ السَّمَآءُ كَالْمُهْلِ ﴿٨﴾ وَتَكُوْنُ
الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَا يَسْئَلُ حَمِيْمٌ حَمِيْمًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُّبَصَّرُوْنَهُمْ
يَوَدُّ الْمُجْرِمُ لَوْ يَفْتَدِيْ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍ بِبَنِيْهِ ﴿١١﴾ وَصَاحِبَتِهٖ
وَاَخِيْهِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَفَصِيْلَتِهِ الَّتِيْ تُؤْوِيْهِ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ
يُنْجِيْهِ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا اِنَّهَا لَظٰى ﴿١٥﴾ نَزَّاعَةً لِّلشَّوٰى ﴿١٦﴾ تَدْعُوْا مَنْ
اَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلّٰى ﴿١٧﴾ وَجَمَعَ فَاَوْعٰى ﴿١٨﴾ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوْعًا
﴿١٩﴾ اِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوْعًا ﴿٢٠﴾ وَّاِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوْعًا ﴿٢١﴾ اِلَّا
الْمُصَلِّيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَآئِمُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُوْمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ لِّلسَّآئِلِ وَالْمَحْرُوْمِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
يُصَدِّقُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّشْفِقُوْنَ

﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُونٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ
حَافِظُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ
مَلُومِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَمَنِ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٣١﴾
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَاتِهِمْ
قَائِمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ
فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُكْرَمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَمَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قِبَلَكَ مُهْطِعِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾
عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَيَطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ
يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ كَلَّا ۖ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَلَا
أُقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ الْمَشَارِقِ وَالْمَغَارِبِ إِنَّا لَقَادِرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا
مِنْهُمْ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ
يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ
سِرَاعًا كَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصُبٍ يُوفِضُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ
ذِلَّةٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

A demanding person has asked for the punishment that is going to befall [1] the disbelievers, for which there is no one to avert [2] from Allah, the Lord of the stairways [3] to whom ascend the angels and the Spirit, in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years. [4] So, observe patience, a good patience. [5] They see it far off. [6] and We see it near. [7] (This punishment will befall) on the Day when the sky will be like dregs of oil, [8] and the mountains will be like dyed wool, [9] and no friend will ask about any friend, [10] (though) they will be made to see each other. A guilty person will desire that he may ransom himself from the torment of that day even by his sons, [11] and his wife and his brother, [12] and his kindred that sheltered him, [13] and all those on earth, then he may redeem himself. [14] By no means! It is the flaming fire [15] that will pull out the skin of the scalp. [16] It will call him who had turned his back and fled away (from the Truth,) [17] and accumulated

(wealth) and hoarded (it). [18]

Indeed man is created weak in courage, [19] **very upset when touched by evil,** [20] **and very niggard when visited by good (fortune),** [21] **except the performers of *ṣalāh*,** [22] **who are regular in their *ṣalāh*,** [23] **and those in whose riches there is a specified right** [24] **for the one who asks and the one who is deprived,** [25] **and those who believe in the Day of Judgment as true,** [26] **and those who are fearful of the torment of their Lord -** [27] **- Indeed the torment of their Lord is not something to be fearless from.** [28] **and those who guard their private parts,** [29] **except from their wives and those (slave-girls) owned by their hands, because they are not to be blamed,** [30] **but the one who seeks (sexual gratification) beyond that, then such people are the transgressors,** [31] **and those who are careful about their trusts and covenants,** [32] **and those who are upright in their testimonies,** [33] **and those who take due care of their *ṣalāh*.** [34] **Those will be honored in gardens (of Jannah).** [35]

So what has happened to those who disbelieve that they are rushing towards you [36] **from the right and from the left, in groups?** [37] **Does every one of them aspire to be admitted to the garden of bliss? *** [38] **By no means! We have created them from what they know.** [39]** **So, I swear by the Lord of the points of sunrise and those of sunset, We are powerful** [40] **to bring those better than them in their place, and We are not to be frustrated.** [41] **So, leave them involved in pastime and play until they encounter their Day which they are promised,** [42]__ **the Day they will come out of the graves quickly, as if they were rushing toward idols,** [43] **with their eyes downcast, enveloped by ignominy. That is the Day which they were being promised.** [44]

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*. The disbelievers used to come to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in groups mocking at the Muslims, and denying the Islamic beliefs, including Resurrection. But at the same time, they used to claim, in ironical style, that they would enter the Paradise, and enjoy its bliss. This verse refers to this attitude of the disbelievers.

. Since their pretended aspiration to enter Paradise was merely a mockery, and in fact they intended to deny Resurrection, their denial is refuted in this verse by saying that admittedly Allah has created them from a lifeless drop of semen, as they knew it well, and a drop of semen is more difficult to be transformed into a perfect human being. If Allah has power to make it a living man, how easy it is for Him to give life to a dead body! Still, they do not believe in Resurrection. Then, how can they enter Paradise?' **(Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

Commentary

سَاَلَ سَآئِلٌ (A demanding person has asked for the punishment that is going to befall....70:1). The Arabic word *suwāl/su'āl* means to 'ask a question'. The word is used in more than one sense: [1] It could mean to inquire about something. In this sense, the Arabic word is followed by the preposition "*an*' [about]; and [2] It is used in the sense of 'request'. In this sense, the word is followed by the preposition '*bi*' [for] as in this instance.

Nasā'ī transmits a narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that this demanding person was Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith. In rejecting the Qur'ān and the Prophet ﷺ, he daringly demanded:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنْ كَانَ هٰذَا هُوَالْحَقَّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَاَمْطِرْعَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اَوِئْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ .

'O Allah, if this be indeed the truth [revealed] from You, then, rain down upon us stones from the heavens, or bring upon us a painful punishment. [8:32]

The result of this demand was that Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith was killed by Muslims in the Battle of Badr. (Maẓharī, citing the narration of Ibn Abī Ḥātim). The Qur'ān, further setting down the factual position of the demanded punishment, says that the punishment is inevitable and will most certainly occur in this world or in the Hereafter or in both the worlds. It cannot be averted. The impending punishment is from Allah, the Lord of the stairways. The last statement is also the proof of the preceding statement, in that the punishment is from the Lord of the Ascending Steps. It is not possible for anyone to avert it.

The word *ma'ārij* is the plural of *mi'rāj* or *mi'raj*. It means a 'ladder or a staircase, having steps for reaching high places. The Divine attribute given in this verse as '*dhīl-ma'ārij*' [Lord of the stairways] means that He is the Lord of high degrees. This is the interpretation given by Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ. Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says that these stairways or higher rungs are seven heavens one above another, and '*dhīl-ma'ārij*' means '*dhīs-samāwāt*', that is to say, *mālik-us-samāwāt* [Lord of the heavens].

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَالرُّوْحُ (to whom ascend the angels and the Spirit ...70:4). In other words, the angels and Jibra'īl ؑ ascend these levels which are one on top of the other. Although the word 'angels' include 'Jibra'īl ؑ',

his name is singled out specifically on account of his special honour.

فِىْ يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهٗ خَمْسِيْنَ اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ (in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years.. ...70:4). This statement, grammatically, is connected to an understood verb, which is *yaqa'u* [will occur]. The sense is that the inevitable punishment mentioned earlier will occur on a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudrī ﷺ narrates that the blessed Companions asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the length of the day that measures fifty thousand years. He replied: "I swear by the Being in Whose control is my life! The day for the believers will be lighter and less than the time during which they would perform an obligatory *ṣalāh*." (Transmitted by Aḥmad, Abū Ya'lā, Ibn Ḥibbān, Baihaqī through a '*ḥasan*' chain of narrators - Maẓharī)

And the following *Ḥadīth* is reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ:

يكون على المؤمنين كمقدار مابين الظهر والعصر اخرجه الحاكم والبيهقى مرفوعًا وموقوفًا. (مظهرى)

"The time on this day for the believers will be like that between *'aṣr* and *maghrib*". (This *Ḥadīth* is reported both in *marfū'* and *mauqūf* ways, that is, in some versions, this is the statement of Abū Hurairah ﷺ himself, while in others it is attributed by him to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.)

These *aḥādīth* indicate that the length of fifty thousand years is a 'relative term'. In relation to unbelievers the day would be as long as five thousand years, and in relation to the believers it would be as short as the time between *'aṣr* and *maghrib* or even shorter.

The Length of the Day of Judgement - A thousand years or Fifty Thousand Years? An Analysis

According to the above verse, the measure of the Day of Judgement is fifty thousand years but, according to the following verse of Sūrah As-Sajdah, the length of the day is mentioned as one thousand years:

يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ اِلَيْهِ فِىْ يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهٗٓ اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّوْنَ.

He manages (every) matter from the sky to the earth, then it (every matter) will ascend to Him in a day the measure of

which is a thousand years according to the way you count. [32:5]

Apparently, there seems to be a discrepancy between the two verses. The narratives cited earlier resolve this apparent contradiction. Length and shortness of time are relative concepts. It will be different according to different groups and their varying conditions. Relative to the entire body of die-hard unbelievers, it will measure fifty thousand years, and relative to the entire body of righteous believers, the day will be made so easy that it will seem easier than a person performing *ṣalāh* in this world. In between the two bodies of believers and unbelievers are there may be some groups of unbelievers for whom the day will seem to be one thousand years. It is also relative to varying psychological conditions that a person might be experiencing. If a person is feeling upset or is experiencing excruciating pain, time will hardly seem to move for him. An hour sometimes seems like more than a day or even more than a week. When a person, on the other hand, is in comfort and peace, the longest time will seem the shortest.

Maẓharī has interpreted verse [5] of Sūrah As-Sajdah differently. He says that the day of a thousand years mentioned here refers to one of the days of the phenomenal world. Jibra'il عليه السلام and other angels with him descend from the heavens to the earth and then ascend from the earth to the heavens. This is such a long journey that if man were to undertake it, it would take him a thousand years. Authentic *aḥādīth* report that the journey from heavens to earth takes five hundred years and the journey back from earth to the heaven takes another five hundred years, totalling a thousand years according to human travelling. Assuming man were to conquer this distance, a return journey would take him a thousand years between heavens and earth and back, although the angels cover this distance in a very short time. In short, verse [5] of Sūrah As-Sajdah refers to a day of the phenomenal world while the verse of Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij refers to the Day of Judgement which will be very much longer than the days of this world, the length and shortness of which will be experienced differently by different people according to their conditions. And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا. وَّنَرٰهُ قَرِيبًا (They see it far off, and We see it near....70:6-7). In this context, the expressions 'far off' and 'near' do not refer to time or space, but 'far off' in terms of possibility and occurrence. The verse

purports to describe that the pagans see the occurrence of Resurrection as impossible, and Allah sees its occurrence not only possible, but a certain reality.

وَلَا يَسْئَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا. يُبَصَّرُوْنَهُمْ (and no friend will ask about any friend, (though) they will be made to see each other....70:10,11). The word *ḥamīm* means a 'sincere friend'. The context describes the horrors of the Day of Resurrection. On that Day, no bosom friend will inquire about his friend - let alone helping him. This is not because they will not be able to see each other. The Divine power, in fact, will make them see each other. Every person will be in a state of 'each for himself'. No person will be able to pay heed to the comfort or discomfort, pleasure or pain of others.

كَلَّا ط اِنَّهَا لَظٰى. نَزَّاعَةً لِّلشَّوٰى (By no means! It is the flaming fire, that will pull out the skin of the scalp...70:15,16). The pronoun of *innahā* (it) refers to 'Fire' and the word *lazā* means 'the flaming fire'. The word *shawā* is the plural of *shawāh* and it refers to 'the scalp or the skin of the human head, and also the skin of the hands and the legs'. The verse describes that the Fire of Hell would be a raging blaze that will pull out the skin of the scalp.

تَدْعُوْا مَنْ اَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلّٰى. وَجَمَعَ فَاَوْعٰى (It will call him who had turned his back and fled away (from the truth.) and accumulated (wealth) and hoarded (it)....70:17,18). The phrase 'accumulated wealth' signifies 'wealth accumulated by unlawful means' and the phrase 'hoarded it' signifies 'not fulfilling the pecuniary obligations as imposed by the Sharī'ah', as is confirmed by authentic *aḥādīth*.

اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوْعًا (Indeed man is created weak in courage...70:19). The *halū'*, literally, means 'one who is greedy, impatient, lacking courage'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that the word *halū'* in the verse refers to a 'person who is greedy about unlawful wealth'. Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ says that the word refers to a 'miserly person'. Muqatil says that it refers to a 'person who is impatient and miserly'. All meanings attached assigned to this word are near-synonyms. The word *halu'* comprehends all these meanings. The verses that follow elaborate on the meaning of this word. In the meantime a doubt might arise here which needs to be disposed of. If it is objected that, according to this verse of the Holy Qur'ān, man is created weak in courage, in other words, it is man's nature

or his natural weakness, to be impatient, greedy and miserly - then it is not his fault, and why is he declared 'guilty'? This doubt may be allayed thus: Allah has created human nature such that it has the innate capacity to do good as well as evil. He has endowed him with intellect and intelligence. He has raised His Prophets with His Message and sent down His Books clearly stating the consequences of every action chosen by his free will. He has the right to choose between good and bad. Man, in this sense, will be declared 'guilty', and consequently punished on account of freely choosing to do the wrong deed, not on account of his inborn capacity. This interpretation is confirmed by the following verses that speak only of actions of choice.

اذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوْعًا . وَاِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوْعًا (very upset when touched by evil, and very niggard when visited by good (fortune)...70:20-21). This verse describes the fickle nature of man. When bad things happen to him he becomes desperate and upset, and loses patience. When good things come to him, such as wealth and comfort, he becomes begrudging and miserly in spending his wealth for good causes. 'Impatience', in this context, signifies 'that which is outside the limits of Sharī'ah'. 'Niggard', in this context, signifies 'failing to fulfill pecuniary obligations imposed by the Sharī'ah' as explained previously. The verses that follow make an exception of the righteous believers to the characteristics of the general body of human beings. This exception starts from إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّيْنَ (except the performers of *ṣalāh*...70:22) and ends at عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَآئِمُوْنَ (regular in their *ṣalāh*.... 70:23)

The first exception is expressed with the words 'the performers of *ṣalāh*' [22]. Obviously, it means the believers, but referring to them as 'performers of *ṣalāh*' indicates that '*ṣalāh*' is the greatest sign and the essential characteristic of a believer. In fact, the only people worthy of the name 'believers' are 'the performers of *ṣalāh*'. The following verses describe the qualities of the performers of *ṣalāh*.

اَلَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَآئِمُوْنَ (who are regular in their *ṣalāh*...70:23). This means that the entire *ṣalāh* needs to be performed with due concentration. Imām Baghawī, on the basis of his own chain of narrators, transmits a narration on the authority of Abūl-Khair that they asked Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir ﷺ about the meaning of this verse (23) whether it implies that they perform their *ṣalāh* constantly and always

without any break or non-stop, he replied that is not its meaning. It means they, from the outset to the end, perform it with due concentration - without an intentional deviation This is similar to the verse 2 of Sūrah Mu'minūn:

اَلَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِيْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُوْنَ

'who are concentrative in their *ṣalāh* [23:2]'

Thus Verse 23 describes the quality of *Khushū'* ('humbleness) while Verse 34 وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ (and those who take due care of their *ṣalāh*) speaks of those who regularly offer it on its due time and take care of its general etiquette. Thus it may not be surmised that the subject-matter has been repeated. The qualities of the righteous believers given in forthcoming verses are almost the same as those given in Sūrah Al- Mu'minūn.

Rates of *Zakāh* are Specified by Allah

وَالَّذِيْنَ فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُوْمٌ (and those in whose riches there is a specified right...70:24). This verse shows that the quantifications of *Zakāh* have been fixed by Allah. The details are recorded in authentic *aḥādīth*. These quantifications, whether relating to the *niṣāb* (the minimum limit on which *Zakāh* is payable) or to the rate of payment, being fixed by Allah Ta'ālā cannot be changed by anyone at any time.

فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ (but the one who seeks [sexual gratification] beyond that, then such people are the transgressors...70:31). The preceding verse permitted to have sex with their wives and with slave-girls who are lawfully in their possession. The current verse prohibits sexual gratification beyond this limit. This verse also excludes women who, according to Sharī'ah, fall within the prohibited degree. Similarly, *Mut'ah* (hiring a woman for a temporary period for the purpose of enjoying sex with her) is not a marriage according to Sharī'ah, therefore, it is also included in the meaning of this verse.

Masturbation is Forbidden

According to most jurists, masturbation falls under the generality of verse [31], hence forbidden. Ibn Juraij says that he asked Sayyidnā 'Aṭā' رحمه الله about it and the latter replied that it is *makrūh* (reprehensible), adding that he heard that on the Plain of Ḥashr some people will come

whose hands will be pregnant. He feels these will be the people who used to satisfy their sexual lust with their hands. Sayyidnā Saʻīd Ibn Jubair ﷺ says that Allah punished a nation who used to fondle with their private parts with their hands. A *Ḥadīth* reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said:

مَلعون من نكح يده

"Cursed is he who marries his hand."

The chain of authorities of this *Ḥadīth* is weak. [Maẓharī].

Rights of Allah and Rights of Human beings both are included in Trust Obligations

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِاَمٰنٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رٰعُوْنَ (and those who are careful about their trusts and covenants...70:32). The word *amānāt* is the plural of *amānah* 'trust and covenant' as in:

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَاْمُرُكُمْ اَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْاَمٰنٰتِ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهَا

'Surely, Allah commands you to fulfill trust obligations towards those entitled to them. [4:58]'

The use of plural number indicates that *amānah* does not only refer to 'that which people might deposit with a trustee for safe-keeping' but it also refers to 'all obligatory rights that are necessary to fulfill'. Breach of trusts and covenants is dishonesty. Trust obligations include all Divine rights, such as *ṣalāh*, *ṣiyām*, *ḥajj* and *Zakāh*, as well as all human rights, such as rights that Allah has imposed between human beings, or human beings themselves might have entered into binding contracts and covenants. Fulfilment of them is obligatory. Failure to comply with their terms and conditions would amount to breach, or dishonesty. [Maẓharī, condensed].

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِشَهٰدٰتِهِمْ قَآئِمُوْنَ (...and those who are upright in their testimonies, [70:33]'. The word *shahādāt* is the plural of *shahādah*. The use of plural number in this verse too indicates that there are many types and categories of 'testimony', and it is necessary to stand firm by one's testimony of any type. This includes testifying to the faith of Islam, Divine existence and His Oneness, and testifying that Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ is His Final Messenger. It is obligatory to testify to the crescent of Ramaḍān, if one has seen it. Giving a true and accurate

account of Sharī'ah matters as expert witness, and in all judicial hearings is also implied. Everyone is duty-bound to offer the testimony when summoned. It is prohibited to add or omit any part thereof. According to this verse, it is obligatory to bear testimony, to be upright in it and stand firm by it.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij
Ends here

Sūrah Nūḥ
(Noah)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 28 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 28

إِنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦٓ أَنْ أَنذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ إِنِّى لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾ أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا ٱللَّهَ وَٱتَّقُوهُ
وَأَطِيعُونِ ﴿٣﴾ يَغْفِرْ لَكُم مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ط
إِنَّ أَجَلَ ٱللَّهِ إِذَا جَآءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ لَوْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّى
دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِى لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا ﴿٥﴾ فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَآءِىٓ إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿٦﴾
وَإِنِّى كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوٓا أَصَٰبِعَهُمْ فِىٓ ءَاذَانِهِمْ
وَٱسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصَرُّوا وَٱسْتَكْبَرُوا ٱسْتِكْبَارًا ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّى
دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّىٓ أَعْلَنتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا ﴿٩﴾
فَقُلْتُ ٱسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُرْسِلِ ٱلسَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُم
مِّدْرَارًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيُمْدِدْكُم بِأَمْوَٰلٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ وَيَجْعَل
لَّكُمْ أَنْهَٰرًا ﴿١٢﴾ مَّا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ
أَطْوَارًا ﴿١٤﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَٰوَٰتٍ طِبَاقًا ﴿١٥﴾
وَجَعَلَ ٱلْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ ٱلشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَٱللَّهُ

أَنۢبَتَكُم مِّنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا
﴿١٨﴾ وَٱللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا ﴿١٩﴾ لِّتَسْلُكُوا۟ مِنْهَا سُبُلًا
فِجَاجًا ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ نُوحٌ رَّبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِى وَٱتَّبَعُوا۟ مَن لَّمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالُهُۥ
وَوَلَدُهُۥٓ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَكَرُوا۟ مَكْرًا كُبَّارًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَالُوا۟ لَا تَذَرُنَّ
ءَالِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا
﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا۟ كَثِيرًا وَلَا تَزِدِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَٰلًا ﴿٢٤﴾ مِّمَّا
خَطِيٓـَٰٔتِهِمْ أُغْرِقُوا۟ فَأُدْخِلُوا۟ نَارًا فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا۟ لَهُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ
أَنصَارًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَّبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ مِنَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ دَيَّارًا
﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّكَ إِن تَذَرْهُمْ يُضِلُّوا۟ عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوٓا۟ إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا
﴿٢٧﴾ رَّبِّ ٱغْفِرْ لِى وَلِوَٰلِدَىَّ وَلِمَن دَخَلَ بَيْتِىَ مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ وَلَا تَزِدِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ إِلَّا تَبَارًا ﴿٢٨﴾

We sent Nūḥ to his people saying (to him), "Warn your people before a painful punishment comes to them." [1] **He said, "O my people, I am a plain warner for you** [2] **to say that you must worship Allah, and fear Him, and obey me,** [3] **and Allah will forgive you your sins, and will defer you to an appointed term. Indeed when Allah's term comes, it is not deferred, if you only know!"** [4] **He said, "My Lord, I have called my people night and day,** [5] **but my call did not cause them to progress but in running away.** [6] **And whenever I called them, so that You forgive them, they put their fingers into their ears, and wrapped their clothes around themselves, and grew obstinate, and waxed proud in extreme arrogance.** [7] **Then I called them loudly,** [8] **then I spoke to them in public and spoke to them in private.** [9] **So I said, "Pray to your Lord for your forgiveness, Indeed He is Very-Forgiving,** [10] **and (if you do so,) He will cause the heavens to rain upon you in abundance,** [11] **and will help you with riches and sons, and will cause gardens to grow for you, and cause rivers to flow for you.** [12] **What has happened to you that you do not appreciate Majesty of Allah,** [13] **while He has created you in different phases?** [14] **Did you not see how**

Allah has created seven heavens one upon another, [15] **and has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a lamp?** [16] **And Allah has caused you to grow out of the earth a perfect growth,** [17] **then He will send you back into it, and will bring you forth once again.** [18] **And Allah has made the earth a spread for you,** [19] **so that you may go about its broad ways."** [20]

And said Nūḥ, "My Lord, they disobeyed me, and followed him whose wealth and children added nothing to him but loss, [21] **and they devised an enormous plan,** [22] **and said, "Never forsake your gods, and never forsake *Wadd*, nor *Suwā'*, nor *yaghūth* and *Ya'ūq* and *Nasr*.** [23] **And they have led many astray. And (O my Lord,) let not the wrongdoers progress in anything but deviation from the right path."** [24] **Because of their sins, they were drowned, and then admitted into the Fire. So they found no helpers for them besides Allah.** [25] **And said Nūḥ, "My Lord, do not leave on earth even a single inhabitant from the disbelievers (surviving).** [26] **If You leave them (surviving), they will lead Your slaves astray, and will beget none but a sinful disbeliever.** [27] **My Lord, grant pardon to me, and to my parents, and to everyone who enters my home as a believer, and to all the believing men and believing women, and do not increase the wrongdoers but in ruin.** [28]

Commentary

يَغْفِرْ لَكُم مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ (and Allah will forgive you your sins,__ 71:4). The particle *mīn* is often used to indicate division into parts, that is, to refer to only a part of an amount, group or number. If it is taken in that sense here, it would signify that by embracing the faith only those sins would be forgiven which pertains to the Divine rights because violation of human rights would be forgiven only when the believer fulfills the human rights which he has violated [such as pecuniary obligations] and if they cannot be fulfilled [such as hurting somebody physically or verbally], then the person who has been so hurt must first be requested to forgive. The *ḥadīth* which reports that by embracing the faith all sins are forgiven must be understood in the light of the foregoing explanation. In other words, the *ḥadīth* has the same conditions attached to it as the verse under comment, that is, violation of the rights of the human beings is not forgiven except upon fulfillment of those rights or seeking forgiveness from the victims of that violation. Other scholars of Tafsīr

interpret the particle min as *zā'idah,* (having no meaning, and added only because of usage). In this way, it signifies that all their sins would be forgiven. However, on the basis of other texts, this general expression is subject to the conditions mentioned above.

وَيُؤَخِّرْكُمْ اِلَى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى (and will defer you to an appointed term.__ 71:4). The word *ajal* means 'term' or 'period' and the word *musammā* means 'appointed'. The verse purports to say that if they embrace the faith, Allah will defer them until a specified time and will not destroy them before their appointed time in this world. On the other hand, if they do not embrace the faith, it is likely that they might be punished and destroyed before their appointed term. In other words, when the Divine decree of punishment is in active operation, it cannot be deferred. This indicates that at times the appointed term or life span has a condition attached to it. If a particular person fulfills the attached condition, his life span, for instance, will be eighty years; and if he did not fulfill the condition, he will meet his death at the age of seventy years. If a person is ungrateful to Allah, his life span will decrease; and if he is grateful to Him, his life span will increase. Authentic *aḥādīth* report that maintaining family ties and obedience to parents increase the life span. In short, the verse is proof of the fact that obedience to Allah, righteousness and maintaining the family ties truly increase the life span of a person.

Fluctuation in Man's Life Span

Maẓharī explains in his commentary that there are two categories of Predestination. One of them is termed *taqdīr mubram* 'Final and Definitive Destiny' and the other is termed *taqdīr mu'allaq* 'Conditional Destiny'. The former is defined as the decisive and unalterable Destiny that is never changed; and the latter is defined as the Decree to which is attached a condition. It would be recorded in the Preserved Tablet as conditional statements thus: If a person obeys Allah, then his life span will be extended to, for example, seventy years. 'If he disobeys Him, then he will die at the age of fifty years.' The latter category is alterable. The Qur'ān mentions both the types of Destiny thus:

يَمْحُوا اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيُثْبِتُ وَعِنْدَهٗٓ اُمُّ الْكِتٰبِ

Allah wipes off what He wills and affirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother Book. [13:39]

The term 'Mother Book' refers to that Book in which is recorded the 'Final Destiny' and Allah is fully aware of whether or not the condition that is recorded in 'Conditional Destiny' will be fulfilled. The 'Final Destiny' is the exclusive domain of Divine knowledge. Recorded there are the decisions, and commands that issue forth as the final outcome after the conditions of deeds have been fulfilled or supplication has been answered. Therefore, that is totally free of obliteration and assertion and addition and deletion.

Sayyidnā Salmān al-Fārisi ﷺ has reported Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying:

لا يردّ القضآء الّا الدّعاء ولا يزيد فى العمر الّا البرّ رواه الترمذى (مظهرى)

"Nothing but supplication averts the decree, and nothing but good treatment of parents increases life span." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī, as quoted by Maẓharī]

The word *al-birr* means 'to treat parents kindly'. The purpose of the *ḥadīth* is to show that on account of these deeds the 'Conditional Destiny' can be changed. In short, the verse under comment says: اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى (and will defer you to an appointed term ... 71:4).

The deferment is contingent upon embracing the faith. This describes the 'Conditional Destiny' about their life span, the knowledge of which probably was given to Nūḥ ﷺ. As a result, he explained to his people that they are given respite till their full term during which, if they embraced the faith, Allah will not destroy them by worldly punishment. If they failed to embrace the faith, Allah will destroy them in this world before their appointed term. In addition, they will suffer eternal perdition of the Hereafter. It further shows that death is inevitable when the time specified by Allah in the final destiny arrives, even if they embrace the faith. Death in any case is inescapable. Allah has, in His consummate wisdom, not made this world immortal. It must, of necessity, perish. Faith and obedience, on the one hand, and infidelity and sinning, on the other, do not make any difference. The fragment of the verse that reads:

اِنَّ اَجَلَ اللّٰهِ اِذَا جَآءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ (Indeed when Allah's term comes, it is not deferred_ 71:4) refers to this immutable destiny.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ reports that Nūḥ ﷺ was commissioned as a

Prophet at the age of forty years and, according to the explicit text of the Qur'ān, he lived for nine hundred and fifty years. During this long life, he neither gave up his attempt at reform nor did he lose hope. His nation persecuted him but he exercised patience.

On the authority of Ḍaḥḥāk's ﷺ narration, Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ reports that Nūḥ's عليه السلام people would beat him up until he falls. They would then wrap him up in a blanket and put him into a house, thinking that he was dead. When he comes to his senses the next day, he would call them towards Allah and preach to them. Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq narrates from 'Ubaid Ibn 'Amr Laithī that according to a report he has received, when his nation would throttle him, he would fall fainted and when he recovered from his fainting, he would pray for them, thus:

ربّ اغفر لقومی انّهم لاَ یعلمون

"O Allah, forgive my people because they do not know."

When the first generation of Nūḥ عليه السلام failed him, he still held out hope that their children might embrace the faith, but that generation too passed away without faith. Expecting that the third generation might embrace the faith, he continued with his arduous task of preaching the truth, but that generation too frustrated him. Miraculously, Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام was granted a long life [950 years] but the different generations of his people did not have such long lives.

Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام preached to his people day and night and spoke to them in public and in private, individually and collectively. He reminded them of the great favours and gifts that Allah had bestowed upon them, and the great blessings that await them in Paradise if they chose the path of rectitude. He also preached to them that if they embraced the faith and acted righteously, the doors of comfort, prosperity, welfare and well-being will open up for them in this world as well. He drew their attention to the manifestation of Allah's perfect power. But they did not pay heed. On the other hand, Allah informed Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام through revelation that none of his people were going to embrace the faith except for those who have already done so, describing it thus:

إِنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ آمَنَ

'And it was revealed to Nūḥ that none of your people would ever

believe except those who have already believed__[11:36]'

He warned them of the evil consequences of rejection of the Divine Message. But all his preaching and warning, his sympathy with and solicitude for, their well-being only met with ridicule, opposition and abuse; and instead of following one whose heart was full of love for them, they chose to follow those leaders who led them to destruction. Prophet Nūḥ's عليه السلام exhortations and preaching of a whole lifetime proved a voice in the wilderness, generation after generation passed away, every coming generation proved to be worse and more wicked than the previous generation. So, he prayed to Allah to ruin and destroy the enemies of the Truth. As a result, the prayer was answered and the entire nation was drowned and destroyed except for the believers who were asked to embark upon the ark. Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام invited them to believe in, and pray to Allah, to seek His pardon for their past sins and explained to them the worldly advantage of this:

يُّرْسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّدْرَارًا. وَّيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِاَمْوَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ

(and He will cause the heavens to rain upon you in abundance, and will help you with riches and sons, ...71:11-12)

Most scholars have deduced from this verse that, by repenting and asking for pardon of sins, Allah sends down rain in abundance according to the need of time; no famine occurs; and through the blessings of praying for pardon of sins, Allah will reinforce people with more wealth and children. Occasionally, the consummate wisdom of Allah [which is unfathomable] wills the contrary situation. Generally, however, the Divine custom with people is to alleviate calamities if they repent, pray for pardon and give up sins. Versions of *aḥādīth* confirm this.

اَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ طِبَاقًا. وَّجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيْهِنَّ نُوْرًا

(Did you not see how Allah has created seven heavens one upon another, and has made the moon a light therein? ....71:15-16)

These verses are adduced as proof positive of Divine Oneness and His power. He has created seven heavens, one on top of the other, and placed the moon as a light in them. The prepositional phrase in the verse apparently indicates that the moon is placed in the body of the heavens. The subject is fully discussed in Sūrah Al-Furqān under the following verse:

تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ فِى السَّمَآءِ بُرُوْجًا وَّجَعَلَ فِيْهَا سِرٰجًا وَّقَمَرًا مُّنِيْرًا ﴿٦١﴾

Glorious is the One who made stellar formations in the sky and placed therein a lamp (sun) and a bright moon. [25:61]

Complaining about his people, Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام said:

وَمَكَرُوْا مَكْرًا كُبَّارًا (and they devised an enormous plan....71:22). In other words, they hatched a mighty plot. They rejected the message and persecuted Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام. In addition, they let loose hooligans and hoodlums on him. They agreed that they will not abandon their gods, especially the five major idols whose names appear in the following verse:

لَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَّلَا سُوَاعًا وَّلَا يَغُوْثَ وَيَعُوْقَ وَ نَسْرًا (and never forsake Wadd, nor *Suwā'*, nor *yaghūth* and *Ya'ūq* and *Nasr*.....71:23). Imām Baghawī reports that these five were in fact righteous servants Allah who lived in the intervening period between Prophets 'Ādam and Nūḥ عليهما السلام. There were many people who held them in high regard and followed their footsteps. Even after their death, they followed their footsteps and complied with Divine injunctions. A while later, Satan misled them. He put it to them that if they make pictures of their righteous elders and place them in front, their worship would be perfect and they would attain the quality of humility and humbleness. Those people fell into the Satanic trap and carved statues of them and placed them in their temples. When they saw the statues of their elders, their memories were refreshed and experienced a special feeling. That generation gradually died and a new generation came up. Satan played another trick with them. He imparted to them that the object of worship of their elders were statues and idols. They fell for this trick and worshipped them. This is the beginning of idol-worship or idolatry. People of Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام gradually got steeped in idolatry. They had many idols, the five mentioned in the verse under comment being the most popular because of the deep love they had for them.

وَلَا تَزِدِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ اِلَّا ضَلٰلًا (...let not the wrongdoers progress in anything but deviation from the right path.....71:24). This is the supplication of Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام against his people. It may not be surmised that the duty and obligation of a Prophetic office is to guide the people, but here Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام is praying for increase in his people's misguidance. Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام did not invoke this curse out of despair or impatience. In fact, he

invoked it when, after doing full justice to his mission for many centuries, his people chose the path of deviation, rebellion, disbelief and obstinacy and persisted in it until they had reached a point of no return, of which Allah informed him thus, 'And it was revealed to Nūḥ that none of your people would ever believe except those who have already believed__ [11:36]'. This situation made it clear to him that his people would definitely and certainly die in the state of disbelief. So he prayed for their final destiny to overtake them sooner and destroy them.

مِمَّا خَطِيْٓـٰتِهِمْ أُغْرِقُوْا فَأُدْخِلُوْا نَارًا، فَلَمْ يَجِدُوْا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ أَنْصَارًا (Because of their sins they were drowned, and then admitted into the Fire. So they found no helpers for them besides Allah.....71:25). The 'sins' referred to here are unpardonable sins of '*kufr* and *shirk*'. They were drowned in water and emerged in fire, an opposing punishment which is not impossible for Divine power. Obviously, the 'fire' mentioned in the verse does not refer to the fire of Hell, but refers to the fire in the realm of '*Barzakh*' (the existence between the worldly life and the life of the Hereafter). The Qur'ān speaks of the fire in the realm of '*Barzakh*'. It is evident that Sayyidnā Nūḥ's عليه السلام people will be punished in Hell-Fire in the Hereafter after resurrection and accounting for their deeds.

Qur'ān Confirms Punishment in the Grave

The verse under comment confirms that people will be punished in the realm of *Barzakh,* usually referring to the period of stay in the grave. This further proves that, since the evil-doers will be punished in the grave, the righteous believers will also be rewarded and blessed with favours. Authentic and successively transmitted *aḥādīth* report about the reward and punishment in the grave so abundantly and clearly that its reality cannot be denied or rejected. Therefore, there is a total agreement of the Ummah on this issue; and belief in it is the symbol of *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah.*

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Nūḥ
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Jinn

(The Jinns)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 28 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 28

قُلۡ اُوۡحِیَ اِلَیَّ اَنَّهُ اسۡتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الۡجِنِّ فَقَالُوۡا اِنَّا سَمِعۡنَا قُرۡاٰنًا
عَجَبًا ﴿۱﴾ یَّهۡدِیۡۤ اِلَی الرُّشۡدِ فَاٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ؕ وَلَنۡ نُّشۡرِكَ بِرَبِّنَاۤ اَحَدًا ﴿۲﴾
وَّاَنَّهٗ تَعٰلٰی جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَّلَا وَلَدًا ﴿۳﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ كَانَ یَقُوۡلُ
سَفِیۡهُنَا عَلَی اللّٰهِ شَطَطًا ﴿۴﴾ وَّاَنَّا ظَنَنَّاۤ اَنۡ لَّنۡ تَقُوۡلَ الۡاِنۡسُ وَالۡجِنُّ
عَلَی اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ﴿۵﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الۡاِنۡسِ یَعُوۡذُوۡنَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ
الۡجِنِّ فَزَادُوۡهُمۡ رَهَقًا ﴿۶﴾ وَّاَنَّهُمۡ ظَنُّوۡا كَمَا ظَنَنۡتُمۡ اَنۡ لَّنۡ یَّبۡعَثَ اللّٰهُ
اَحَدًا ﴿۷﴾ وَّاَنَّا لَمَسۡنَا السَّمَآءَ فَوَجَدۡنٰهَا مُلِئَتۡ حَرَسًا شَدِیۡدًا
وَّشُهُبًا ﴿۸﴾ وَّاَنَّا كُنَّا نَقۡعُدُ مِنۡهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمۡعِ ؕ فَمَنۡ یَّسۡتَمِعِ الۡاٰنَ
یَجِدۡ لَهٗ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا ﴿۹﴾ وَّاَنَّا لَا نَدۡرِیۡۤ اَشَرٌّ اُرِیۡدَ بِمَنۡ فِی الۡاَرۡضِ اَمۡ
اَرَادَ بِهِمۡ رَبُّهُمۡ رَشَدًا ﴿۱۰﴾ وَّاَنَّا مِنَّا الصّٰلِحُوۡنَ وَ مِنَّا دُوۡنَ ذٰلِكَ ؕ
كُنَّا طَرَآئِقَ قِدَدًا ﴿۱۱﴾ وَّاَنَّا ظَنَنَّاۤ اَنۡ لَّنۡ نُّعۡجِزَ اللّٰهَ فِی الۡاَرۡضِ وَلَنۡ
نُّعۡجِزَهٗ هَرَبًا ﴿۱۲﴾ وَّاَنَّا لَمَّا سَمِعۡنَا الۡهُدٰۤی اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ؕ فَمَنۡ یُّؤۡمِنۡۢ بِرَبِّهٖ
فَلَا یَخَافُ بَخۡسًا وَّلَا رَهَقًا ﴿۱۳﴾ وَّاَنَّا مِنَّا الۡمُسۡلِمُوۡنَ وَ مِنَّا

الْقٰسِطُوْنَ ؕ فَمَنْ اَسْلَمَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا ﴿١٤﴾ وَاَمَّا الْقٰسِطُوْنَ
فَكَانُوْا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَّاَنْ لَّوِاسْتَقَامُوْا عَلَى الطَّرِيْقَةِ
لَاَسْقَيْنٰهُمْ مَّآءً غَدَقًا ﴿١٦﴾ لِّنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيْهِ ؕ وَمَنْ يُّعْرِضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهٖ
يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا ﴿١٧﴾ وَّاَنَّ الْمَسٰجِدَ لِلّٰهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوْا مَعَ اللّٰهِ
اَحَدًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ يَدْعُوْهُ كَادُوْا يَكُوْنُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا
﴿١٩﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَدْعُوْا رَبِّيْ وَلَآ اُشْرِكُ بِهٖٓ اَحَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾ قُلْ اِنِّيْ لَآ اَمْلِكُ
لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا رَشَدًا ﴿٢١﴾ قُلْ اِنِّيْ لَنْ يُّجِيْرَنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اَحَدٌ ۙ وَّلَنْ
اَجِدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾ اِلَّا بَلٰغًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِسٰلٰتِهٖ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّعْصِ
اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ فَاِنَّ لَهٗ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ﴿٢٣﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا رَاَوْا
مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ فَسَيَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ اَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا وَّاَقَلُّ عَدَدًا ﴿٢٤﴾ قُلْ اِنْ
اَدْرِيْٓ اَقَرِيْبٌ مَّا تُوْعَدُوْنَ اَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهٗ رَبِّيْٓ اَمَدًا ﴿٢٥﴾ عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ
فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلٰى غَيْبِهٖٓ اَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضٰى مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ فَاِنَّهٗ
يَسْلُكُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖ رَصَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾ لِّيَعْلَمَ اَنْ قَدْ اَبْلَغُوْا
رِسٰلٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَاَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَاَحْصٰى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا ﴿٢٨﴾

Say, "It has been revealed to me that a group from Jinn has listened (to the Qur'ān), and said (to their people), 'Indeed we have heard an amazing Recital (Qur'ān) [1] **that guides to the right way, so we have believed in it, and we will never associate a partner with our Lord.'** [2] **and (then the Jinns started talking to each other) that exalted is the Glory of our Lord; He has taken neither a wife, nor a son,** [3] **and that the fools among us used to attribute to Allah extremely wrong things,** [4] **and that we thought that the humans and the Jinn would never tell a lie about Allah, (therefore, we had followed them in *shirk* under this impression),** [5] **and that some people from human beings used to seek refuge with some people of the Jinn, and thus they increased them (the Jinns) in arrogance,** [6] **and that they (humans)**

thought as you (O Jinns) thought that Allah would never resurrect anyone, [7] and that we sought (to reach) the sky, but we found it filled with stern guards and flames, [8] and that we used to sit at places therein to listen; but if one will (try to) listen now, he will find a flame in ambush for him, [9] and that we do not know whether it is a bad end that is intended for those on earth, or their Lord has intended for them a right thing, [10] and that some of us are (already) righteous, and some of us are otherwise, and we were on different ways. [11] And that we have now believed that we can never frustrate Allah on the earth, nor can we baffle Him by escape, [12] and that when we heard the Guiding Discourse, we believed in it; so if one believes in his Lord, he will have no fear of either any curtailment (in his reward) or any excess (in his punishment), [13] and that some of us are Muslims, and some of us are unjust; so those who submitted to Islam have found out the right path, [14] As for the unjust, they have become firewood for Hell." [15]

"(And it is also revealed to me) that if they (the people of Makkah) had stood firm on the (right) way, We would have supplied water to them in abundance, [16] so that We test them thereby; and if one turns away from the remembrance of his Lord, He will thrust him into a severe torment, [17] and that *masājids* (mosques) belong to Allah; so, do not invoke anyone along with Allah, [18] and that when Allah's slave stood invoking Him, they almost rushed on him in crowds." [19]

Say, "I invoke my Lord, and do not associate with Him anyone." [20] Say, "I possess no power to cause you any harm or bring you to a right way." [21] Say, "No one can ever save me from Allah, and I can never find a refuge save with Him. [22] However, (I have been given mandate) to convey (commands) from Allah, and His messages. And the one who disobeys Allah and His Messenger, for him there is the fire of Hell, wherein they will live forever. [23] (And the disbelievers will continue to deny the truth and mock at it) until when they will see what they are promised, they will know whose supporters are weaker, and whose numbers are less. [24] Say, "I do not know whether that which you are promised is near, or my Lord has appointed for it a distant term. [25] (He is the) Knower of the Unseen. So He does not let anyone know His Unseen, [26] except a

messenger whom He chooses (to inform through revelation), and then He appoints (angels as) watching guards before him and behind him, (so that devils may not tamper with the divine revelation,) [27] **so that He knows that they (angels) have conveyed the messages of their Lord. And He has encompassed all that is with them, and has comprehensive knowledge of every thing by numbers.** [28]

Commentary

Preliminary Remarks

It seems necessary to know a few facts before the start of the study of the Sūrah, which are as follows:

Fact [1]

Before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the devils used to go up to the heavens and eavesdrop on the conversations of the angels. After his advent, they were pelted with a piercing flame if they attempted to go up and eavesdrop. It is mentioned in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf that a group of jinn went up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ to investigate the reason for this new phenomenon.

Fact [2]

It was customary in the Days of Ignorance that when people halted in a jungle or valley in the course of a journey, they uttered the following words:

اعوذ بعزيز هذا الوادى من شر سفهاء قومه

"I seek refuge in the leader of this valley from the foolish mischief-makers of his nation" --

believing that the leader of the valley (a Jinn) would protect them.

Fact [3]

A terrible famine held Makkah in its grip for several years as a result of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prayer.

Fact [4]

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ called the pagans towards Islam, they opposed him tooth and nail. The first two incidents are taken from Tafsīr Durr Manthūr and the last two incidents are taken from Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr.

نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ (...a group from Jinn....72:1). The word *nafar* is used for a

group consisting of three to ten people. The Jinn referred to here are said to be a group of nine Jinns from a place called Naṣībīn.

Reality of Jinn

Jinn is one of the Divine creatures. They have body and soul. They, like human beings, have intellect and senses, but they are hidden from human eyes. This species of creation is called 'Jinn' because it literally means 'hidden' or 'invisible'. They, like human beings, are created from the four primal elements: dust, water, air and fire, but the element of fire predominates in them, whereas in man the element of dust predominates. They, like human beings, are males and females; and they, like human beings, marry and procreate. Apparently, the word *shaiṭān* [pl. *shayāṭīn*] 'Satan' refers to the 'arrogant mischief-making Jinn'. The existence of Jinn and angels is established by conclusive and incontestable evidence in the Qur'ān and Sunnah, the denial or rejection of which amounts to disbelieving the Qur'ān. [Tafsīr Maẓharī].

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ Say, (It has been revealed to me.....72:1). This shows that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not see the group of Jinn who heard him recite the Qur'ān. Allah informed him by the revelation of Sūrah Al-Jinn.

Circumstances of Revelation

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, of Muslim, and in Tirmidhī and other collections, that Allah's Messenger ﷺ did not by deliberate design make the Jinn listen to the Qur'ān, nor did he see them. The true story is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, with his Companions, was going to the marketplace of 'Ukāẓ. This incident took place at a time when the devils were barred from going to the skies and eavesdropping on the conversations of the angels by being pelted with piercing flames. When the Jinn realised that they were no longer free to eavesdrop, they discussed among themselves that the incident could not be coincidental. There must be a genuine reason for that. So they divided themselves into groups and each group went in different direction to investigate the cause of the new phenomenon. One of the groups arrived at a place called Nakhlah in Tihāmah where Ḥijāz is situated. At that juncture, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was leading the Ṣaḥābah in Fajr *ṣalāh* and the Jinn had the opportunity to hear the Qur'ān. When this group of Jinn heard the Qur'ān, they listened to it very attentively and concluded on oath that it was the Qur'ān that prevented them from eavesdropping in the heavens. Then they returned to their fellow Jinns and recounted to

them the entire episode, which is mentioned in the following verse:

فَقَالُوْا اِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْاٰنًا عَجَبًا (...and said [to their people], 'Indeed we have heard an amazing Recital [Qur'ān]....72:1). Allah informed His Messenger about the entire incident of the Jinn in the verses under discussion.

Abū Ṭālib's Death and the Holy Prophet's Journey to Ṭā'if

Most commentators say that after the death of Abū Ṭālib the Holy Prophet ﷺ felt lonely, having no friend or supporter in Makkah. So, he undertook a journey to Ṭā'if where he approached Banū Thaqīf for assistance against the hostility and persecution of his people. According to Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq's narration, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived in Ṭā'if, he approached the three brothers of Banū Thaqīf. They were recognized as the leaders and honorable members of the tribe. The three brothers were 'Umair's sons, their names being 'Abd Yālil, Sa'ūd and Ḥabīb. They had a Quraishite lady in their house. Allah's Messenger ﷺ invited them to the call of Islam and mentioned about his people's hostility and persecution and asked for help. But they responded very harshly and did not speak to him about anything.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ saw that these three people were the most respected leaders of Banū Thaqīf, from whom he expected a favourable response, but he was disappointed. He said to them that if they did not wish to help him, they should at least keep his arrival and request for help confidential and not tell his people; because if they came to know about it, they would persecute him even more harshly. But the oppressors did not concede to this either. On the contrary, they let loose on him foolish hooligans, slaves and hoodlums, so that they may revile him and make violent noises in public places against him. When they made violent noises, more hoodlums and young violent criminal elements joined in. In order to save himself from the mischief of the hooligans and hoodlums, the Holy Prophet ﷺ took refuge in a vineyard which belonged to two brothers, namely 'Utbah and Shaibah. The brothers themselves were in the vineyard at the time. The hooligans and hoodlums left him and went back. The two brothers were watching him, and they also watched how violently the foolish people behaved towards him. Just then the Quraishite lady, who was in the house of the oppressors, came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He complained to her how her in-laws persecuted him.

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ felt a bit settled in the vineyard, he prayed to Allah. The wordings of the supplication are unusual and on no other

occasion such wordings are recorded:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّیْ اَشْكُوْا اِلَیْكَ ضُعْفَ قُوَّتِیْ وَقِلَّةَ حِیْلَتِیْ وَهَوَانِیْ عَلَی النَّاسِ وَاَنْتَ اَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِیْنَ وَاَنْتَ رَبُّ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِیْنَ فَاَنْتَ رَبِّیْ اِلٰی مَنْ تَكِلُنِیْ اِلٰی بَعِیْدٍ یَتَهَجَّمُنِیْ اَوْ اِلٰی عَدُوٍّ مَّلَّكْتَهٗ اَمْرِیْ اِنْ لَّمْ تَكُنْ سَاخِطًا عَلَیَّ فَلَآ اُبَالِیْ وَلٰكِنَّ عَافِیَتَكَ هِیَ اَوْسَعُ لِیْ. اَعُوْذُ بِنُوْرِ وَجْهِكَ الَّذِیْٓ اَشْرَقَتْ لَهُ الظُّلُمَاتُ وَصَلُحَ عَلَیْهِ اَمْرُ الدُّنْیَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ اَنْ تُنْزِلَ لِیْ غَضَبَكَ لَكَ الْعُتْبٰی حَتّٰی تَرْضٰی وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَاقُوَّةَ اِلاَّ بِكَ. (مظهری باختصار)

"O Allah, I complain to you the weakness of my strength and the shortage of my options, and lack of respect for me in the sight of people. You are the Most Merciful of all, and You are the Cherisher and Sustainer of the weaklings. You are my Cherisher. To whom are You handing me over? - to a stranger who would attack me? Or to an enemy whom You have given control over me (so that he may do as he wishes)? If You are not angry with me, I do not care. Your caring about me is better (which I pray for). I seek refuge in the light of Your blessed Being which dispels all darkness and on the foundation of which all matters related to this world and the next world are set aright. If You send down Your wrath on us, our task is to exert ourselves until we gain Your good pleasure. And there is neither strength nor power except through You." [condensed from Maẓharī].

When Rabī'ah's sons 'Utbah and Shaibah saw this, they felt compassion for him in their heart. They called one of their Christian slaves, 'Addās by name, and asked him to break a bunch of grapes, place it in a plate and give it to that person and ask him to eat. Complying with the instructions, 'Addās kept the plate of grapes in front of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He recited *bismil-lah* 'In the name of Allah' and stretched his hand towards it. 'Addās was watching all this and said: By Allah! this speech [referring to the formula of *basmalah*] is not used by the inhabitants of this city. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him as to where he was from and what his religion was. He replied that he was a Christian and hailed from Nineveh. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him that this means 'you are from the village of Yūnus Ibn Mattā عليه السلام. He asked: "What do you know about Yūnus Ibn Mattā." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "He was my brother. He was Allah's Prophet. I too am Allah's Prophet." At this, 'Addās fell to the Holy Prophet's ﷺ feet. He kissed the blessed head of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his hands and legs. 'Utbah and Shaibah watched the whole incident. One of them said to the other: "I

hope he has not set our slave awry." When 'Addas returned to them, they asked him: "What has happened? You were kissing his hands and feet ?" He replied: "My masters, at this time there is no person better than he on the face of the earth. He has taught me something which none other than a Prophet can teach." They said: "You miserable wretch, may it not happen that this man turns you away from your religion, because your religion in any case is better than his." When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was completely despaired of Thaqīf's assistance, he returned from Ṭā'if to Makkah. On his way back, he halted at Nakhlah and towards the latter part of the night he performed *ṣalāt-ut-tahajjud.* The delegation of Jinns of Naṣībīn of Yemen had also gone there. They heard the Qur'ān and embraced the faith. They went back to their people and recounted to them the whole incident which Allah has mentioned in the verses under comment. [Maẓharī]

A Jinn Companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Ibn Jauzī, in his book *Ṣifat-uṣ-Ṣafwah,* through his own chain of authorities, reports from Sahl Ibn 'Abdullāh رضي الله عنه that he saw an old Jinn, in a place, who was performing *ṣalāh* in the direction of Ka'bah. He was wearing a woolen cloak that looked beautiful on him and in which he looked graceful. After he completed his prayer, Sayyidnā Sahl رضي الله عنه greeted him. Replying to his greeting, he said: 'You seem to be admiring the beauty of this cloak. This cloak is on my body for seven hundred years. I have met Holy Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام in this cloak, and in the same cloak I met Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and I am from among those Jinns about whom Sūrah Al-Jinn was revealed.' According to the Ḥadīth narratives that recount the incident of the 'Night of Jinn',(i.e.the night in which the Jinns visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه was with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ met the Jinns in a valley near Makkah for the specific purpose of inviting them to the call of Islam and making them hear the Qur'ān by deliberate design. Apparently, this incident occurred after the incident mentioned in Sūrah Al-Jinn. 'Allāmah Khafājī has said that reliable Aḥādīth confirm that the Jinn delegations met the Holy Prophet ﷺ six times. Thus there is no contradiction between the two versions of the incident, because they are two separate incidents. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was not even aware of the incident of the Jinn's coming to him and listening to the Qur'ān that is

mentioned in Sūrah Jinn. He only learnt about it later through revelation. This incident happened at Nakhlah on his way back from Ṭā'if. The other narratives from which we gather that the Holy Prophet ﷺ met the Jinn by deliberate design in a valley near the city of Makkah to preach to them and make them hear the Qur'ān - is a separate incident which took place after that.

وَأَنَّهُ تَعٰلٰى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا (and [then the Jinns started talking to each other] that exalted is the Glory of our Lord;....72:3). The word *jadd* means 'majesty/glory' used for Allah. Instead of saying '*jadduhū*' with a third person pronoun referring to Allah, the attributive name '*rabb*' 'Lord' is expressly retained which indicates the exalted position of Allah. The Being who is the Cherisher and sustainer of His creation must, of necessity, occupy the lofty position. Commentators have discussed the grammatical conjunctive construction '*wa annahū*' at length in this verse. It might be of no interest to the general readers.

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُوْلُ سَفِيْهُنَا عَلَى اللّٰهِ شَطَطًا ﴿٤﴾ وَّأَنَّا ظَنَنَّآ أَنْ لَّنْ تَقُوْلَ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ﴿٥﴾

...and that the fools among us used to attribute to Allah extremely wrong things, and that we thought that the humans and the Jinn would never tell a lie about Allah, [therefore, we had followed them in shirk under this impression]. (72:5)

The word *shaṭaṭ* means 'vile words, extravagant or exorbitant or enormous lies'. The word also means 'to transgress or act wrongfully, unjustly or exceed the legitimate bounds'. The believers from amongst Jinn used to put forward their excuse for being involved in disbelief and idolatry thus: The foolish people from amongst their nation uttered vile slander against Allah, whilst they did not think it possible for a human being or a Jinn to impute a lie to Allah. They were thus far caught up in the foolish people's vile words and committed *kufr* and *shirk,* but they had now heard the Qur'ān and the reality had later opened up.

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوْذُوْنَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوْهُمْ رَهَقًا ﴿٦﴾

(...and that some people from human beings used to seek refuge with some peoples of the Jinn, and thus they increased them (the Jinns) in arrogance, [72:6]'

This verse describes the situation that it was customary for people in the Days of Ignorance that when they halted in a valley in the course of a

journey, they sought refuge in the Jinn leader of that valley from the foolish mischief-makers of his nation believing that the leader of the valley will protect them. This made the Jinn think that they are better than human beings. That is why, they seek refuge in their leader but this increased the wickedness of the Jinn.

Rāfi' Ibn 'Umair's ﷺ Islam on account of the Jinn

Maẓharī cites in his Tafsīr that it is reported in *Hawātif-ul-Jinn* through his chain of narrators on the authority of Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ that the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Companion Rāfi' Ibn 'Umair ﷺ recounts an incident of his embracing the Islamic faith, thus:

'One night I was travelling in a desert. Suddenly I was overcome by sleep. So, I alighted from my camel, and before I went off to sleep I uttered the following formula in keeping with the custom of my people:

انّی اعوذ بعظیم هٰذا الوادی من الجنّ

"I seek refuge in the leader of the Jinn of this valley from the foolish mischief-makers of his nation."

I saw in my dream that there is a sword in a person's hand who wants to place it on my camel's chest. I woke up in a shock and looked around in all directions, but found nothing. So, I said to myself that this was some Satanic nightmare. It was not a true dream and fell back into deep sleep and became completely oblivious to my surrounding. I experienced the same dream again. I got up and looked all around the camel, but found nothing. This time, however, I found the camel shivering. I went back to my place and slept away and saw the same dream. I awoke and found my camel tossing about restlessly. Then I saw a youngster in whose hand was a weapon. This was the same person whom I had seen attacking the camel the first time. I saw he was holding the hand of an old man who is stopping him from attacking the camel. Just then three wild zebras appeared. The old man said to the youngster, 'Choose any one of these zebras, and let go this man's camel.' The youngster took one of the zebras and took leave. The old man then looked at me and said, 'You fool, when you seek refuge in a valley, and you fear any danger from the jinn or devils, recite thus:'

اعوذ باللّٰه ربِّ محمّد من هول هٰذا الوادی

"I seek refuge in Allah, the Lord of Muḥammad, from the

> horrors of this valley. Do not seek refuge in any Jinn because that time is gone when human beings used to seek refuge in Jinn.'"

I asked him who that person was. He replied that he was the Arabian Holy Prophet ﷺ, neither eastern nor western. He was raised with his Prophetic mission on a Monday. I asked him where he lived. He replied that he lived in Yathrib which is an area where dates grow abundantly. As soon as the morning dawned, I set for Madīnah and urged my mount to move faster and faster until I reached Madīnah. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw me, he recounted to me the entire episode before I could tell him anything. He invited me to the call of Islam and I embraced the Islamic faith.

Having narrated this story, Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رحمه الله said that the following verse was revealed in this connection. وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ (and that some people from human beings used to seek refuge with some people of the Jinn.....72:6)

وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهُبًا (...and that we sought [to reach] the sky, but we found it filled with stern guards and flames....72:8). The word *sama'* is used in two different senses: 'sky' as well as 'cloud'. It would appear that here the word is used in the latter sense.

The Jinn Used to Go only up to the Clouds to Eavesdrop, Not to the Sky

The Jinn and the devils used to go up to the sky means that they used to go to the 'clouds', take up positions there to sit and eavesdrop. The proof of this is found in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا who reports:

> سمعت رسول الله صلّى اللّٰه عليه وسلّم يقول ان الملائكة تنزل فى العَنَان و هوالسحاب فتذكر الامرالذى قضى فى السماء فَتَسْترق الشّياطين السمع فتسمعه فتتوجّه الى الكُهّان فيكذبون معها مائة كذبة من عند انفسهم (از مظهرى).
>
> " I have heard the Messenger of Allah say that the angels descended in the *'anan* of *sama'* meaning the 'cloud'. There they discussed the decisions Allah has issued in the sky. The devils listened to their private conversations without them knowing about it and passed the information to the soothsayers, mixing it with a hundred lies from their side.'" [Maẓharī].

A narration is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī on the authority of

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ and in Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ to the following effect:

When Allah issues an order in the sky, the angels flap their wings in readiness to obey the order. When the issuance of the order is over, they discuss among themselves. The devils eavesdrop on this discussion, and pass the information to the soothsayers, admixing it with many lies.

This Ḥadīth apparently contradicts the narration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا but in actual fact, there is no conflict between the two narratives. This narrative does not prove that the devils go inside the sky to eavesdrop. Probably, when the order is issued in the first instance by Allah, it filters down to the angels from the upper level to the lower level, until the angels come down to the cloud where they discuss it. The devils steal the information from here as mentioned by Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا [Maẓharī].

At any rate, before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the Jinn and devils had free access to the heavenly information. They used to position themselves in the cloud and eavesdrop on the conversations of the angels and pass the information to the soothsayers. At the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there arose the need to protect the heavenly revelation. As a result, the access of devils to the upper region was stopped in such a way that if a devil attempted to go up, he would be repelled by piercing flames. This was the new phenomenon that excited the curiosity of the devils and Jinn and, dividing themselves into groups, they went to the east and to the west to investigate. One of the groups arrived at a place called Nakhlah where its members heard the Qur'ān and embraced the faith of Islam as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Jinn.

Meteors Existed Since the Inception of Time, but were not Used to Repel the Devils before the Advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It happened only after his Advent

A doubt that may arise here is that the existence of Meteors, which in common parlance are called *inqiḍāḍ-ul-kaukab* the 'falling stars', is not a new phenomenon. This verse, however, indicates that they showed up to repel the devils as if they are new-age phenomena of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In response, it may be stated that there is no denying that the meteors did exist since the inception of time and space before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and that there is no contradiction between what

humanity experienced since the beginning of the world, scientific explanations and the Qur'ānic statement. Philosophers and scientists explain that the meteors may originate from the earth or stars or disintegrating planets, and wander in space at enormous speeds and fall to the earth. Some fiery matter may arise from the surface of the earth and heat up at some point, or the speed of the meteors makes them glow and burn, or a flame emits from a star - and this may have habitually continued ever since. These flames, however, were not used to serve a particular purpose before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ; they were merely a natural phenomena. After the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, meteoric flames were used to serve the purpose of shooting the devils if they attempted to go up and listen furtively the conversation of the angels. See also Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 5/pp 303-305, under [15:17-18].

وَّاَنَّا لَانَدْرِیْٓ اَشَرٌّ اُرِيْدَ بِمَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ اَمْ اَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا (and that we do not know whether it is a bad end that is intended for those on earth, or their Lord has intended for them a right thing,....72:10). The Jinn and devils were barred from having access to heavenly news. In this case it would be a punishment for the inhabitants of the earth. However, if Allah intends them to be rightly guided, He has barred the Jinn and Satan from having access to the heaven, so that they do not interfere with Divine revelation. Therefore, they expressed their reservations about this to the effect that they had no idea as to whether it was a bad end that was intended for the inhabitants of the earth or whether Allah intended them to be rightly guided.

فَمَنْ يُّؤْمِنْۢ بِرَبِّهٖ فَلَا يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَّلَارَهَقًا (...so if one believes in his Lord, he will have no fear of either any curtailment [in his reward] or any excess [in his punishment]...72:13). The word *bakhs,* with *bā'* carrying *fatḥa*] and *khā'* carrying *sukūn*, means 'to reduce the right' and the word *rahaq* means 'disgrace'. In other words, anyone who believes in Allah need fear neither curtailment in the reward of his good deeds, nor disgrace by excess in his punishment in the Hereafter.

وَّاَنَّ الْمَسٰجِدَ لِلّٰهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوْا مَعَ اللّٰهِ اَحَدًا (...and that *masājid* (mosques) belong to Allah; so, do not invoke anyone along with Allah....72:18). The word *masājid* is the plural of *masjid*. Here the word, could be taken in its popular sense, that is, mosques or places of worship dedicated for the performance of prayers. In this case, it would mean that all mosques belong to Allah, dedicated to His sole worship and therefore we are not

permitted to call on anyone else besides Allah, like the Jews and Christians commit *shirk* in their places of worship. In sum, the mosques must be kept clear of all false beliefs and vile deeds.

The word *masājid* could also have another sense. It could be the plural of *masjad*, with the letter *jīm* carrying *fatḥ*, in which case it would be *maṣdar mīmī* 'infinitivity' and mean 'to prostrate or prostration'. The verse in this sense would signify that worship is reserved exclusively for Allah. It is not permitted to prostrate to anyone, because if he calls on anyone else for help, it is as though he is prostrating to him which must be avoided.

Ruling

By common consent of the scholars, prostration to anyone other Allah is totally forbidden. According to some scholars, it is tantamount to *kufr / shirk*.

قُلْ اِنْ اَدْرِىْٓ اَقَرِيْبٌ مَّا تُوْعَدُوْنَ اَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهٗ رَبِّىْٓ اَمَدًا. عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلٰى غَيْبِهٖٓ اَحَدًا

(Say, "I do not know whether that which you are promised is near, or my Lord has appointed for it a distant term. [He is the] Knower of the Unseen. So He does not let anyone know His Unseen....72:25-26)

The non-believers demanded that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should show them the exact time and date when the Resurrection will occur. In verse [25] he is enjoined to say to them that it was not for him to say when the threatened punishment would come, but come it must. Verse [26] is the proof of the preceding verse. The Holy Prophet ﷺ does not know whether the promised day is close or whether a longer time is appointed for it, because Allah alone is the knower of the Unseen. That is His exclusive characteristics, and therefore He does not divulge His Unseen to anyone. The definite article *alif lam* in *al-ghaib* 'the Unseen' is grammatically referred to as *alif lam* for *istighrāq lil-jins* 'the article encompassing and indicating the entire genus' [as stated in *Rūḥ* with reference to *Raḍī*], that is, He is Omniscient - knowing every species of the Unseen and all genera of the Unseen. In the *iḍāfah* [possessive case] construction *ghaibihī* 'His Unseen', the possessive pronoun refers to 'Allah' and reinforces His predominance over the Unseen. Allah's knowledge comprehends and encompasses every *infima species* [species of species]

and every *summum genus* [genus of genera] of His creation. This is a specialized attribute of Allah. He does not divulge His Unseen to anyone indiscriminately, so that he may store and retrieve the secrets of the unknown world as and when he wishes.

The purport of the verse under comment is to affirm the totality of Allah's knowledge of the Unseen so that He alone is fully aware of every particle of His creation, and to negate such total knowledge of the Unseen for anyone other than Allah. It was possible that an unintelligent person might surmise that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not have any knowledge of the Unseen - so, how can he be a Messenger? Allah reveals to a Messenger thousands of secrets of the Unseen. Anyone to whom no revelation comes down cannot be a Prophet or a Messenger. Thus the following verse makes an exception:

اِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضٰى مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ فَاِنَّهٗ يَسْلُكُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖ رَصَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾

(...except a messenger whom He chooses [to inform through revelation], and then He appoints [angels as] watching guards before him and behind him, [so that devils may not tamper with the divine revelation,].... 72:27)

Difference between 'Knowledge of the Unseen' and 'Reports of the Unseen Events'

The exception made here is the response to the doubt raised by unintelligent people. The negation of the total knowledge of the Unseen does not necessarily entail absolute negation of every unknown secret. For the office of *risālah*, a Messenger needs a certain amount of knowledge of unseen things which Allah grants him through revelation. When Allah sends down the revelation to His Holy Prophet ﷺ, He sends it down under His special protection, and is completely secure against being distorted or tampered with by devils. First of all, the word *rasūl* [Messenger] determines the type of knowledge granted to a Prophet or a Messenger. Evidently, it is the knowledge of the sacred laws and injunctions in its totality, and of the unseen events according to the exigency of time. The next statement states the heavily protected manner in which the unseen knowledge is granted. It is sent down through angels around whom are posted other angels as sentinels. This explanation clarifies the point that the exceptive sentence that affirms the unseen knowledge granted to a Holy Prophet علیہم السلام and a Messenger is a specialized unseen knowledge which is essential and relevant to the

proper functioning of a Prophetic office.

Technically, this 'exception', in Arabic grammar, is referred to as *istithnā' munqaṭi'* which may be defined as the exceptive sentence in which the exception is severed from, or wholly different in kind from, the general description given before. In this sense, whilst the basic sentence negated total Unseen Knowledge in general terms for anyone besides Allah, the exceptive sentence does not affirm it. It merely affirms specialized acquaintance with some reports of the unseen events which the Qur'ān frequently describes as *anbā'ul ghaib,* thus, for instance:

تِلْكَ مِنْ اَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوْحِيْهَا اِلَيْكَ

'These are some reports from the unseen [events] which We reveal to you. [11:49]'

Some unintelligent people do not grasp the distinction between 'Knowledge of the Unseen' and 'reports of the unseen events'. As a result, they attempt to prove 'total knowledge of the Unseen' for the Prophets of Allah, especially for the Last Prophet ﷺ. They believe that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, like Allah, is omniscient - having knowledge of every particle of the universe. This is clearly *shirk* - assigning to the Holy Prophet ﷺ the status of Godhead, God forbid! If any person discloses a secret to a friend of his, of which no one else has that piece of knowledge or information, such a friend cannot be described as omniscient. Likewise, Allah has granted thousands of pieces of information of the unseen world through revelation to His Holy Prophets ﷺ, but it is not true to say that they are omniscient. The ignorant laity do not understand the difference between the concepts. When they are told that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not omniscient, they understand this statement to imply that the Holy Prophet ﷺ [God forbid!] did not have any information about anything unseen. No believer in the world ever holds such a belief, nor can he ever do so because if anyone does so the whole structure of *nubuwwah* and *risālah* would come crumbling down. It is not possible for any believer to behave in this way.

The concluding part of the last verse says:

وَاَحْصٰى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا (...and has comprehensive knowledge of every thing by numbers....72:28). In other words, Allah alone encompasses the perfect knowledge of everything and keeps a meticulous count of it. He has the knowledge of the exact number of particles in the mountains. He has the

knowledge of the exact number of drops in all the oceans of the world. He has the knowledge of the exact number of drops in every rain. He alone has the knowledge of the exact number of leaves on all the trees in the world. Thus it is made clear that the totality of the knowledge of the Unseen is reserved exclusively for Allah, so that there should be no misunderstanding about the above 'exception' clause.

The question of the Unseen Knowledge is fully discussed under [27:65]

قُلْ لَّا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ

Say, "No one in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of the Unseen except Allah." [27:65]

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Jinn
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Muzzammil

(The Wrapped up one)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 20 verses and 2 Sections.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1-20

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ ﴿١﴾ قُمِ الَّيْلَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلاً ﴿٢﴾ نِّصْفَهٗٓ اَوِانْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيْلًا
﴿٣﴾ اَوْزِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَرْتِيْلًا ﴿٤﴾ اِنَّا سَنُلْقِيْ عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا
ثَقِيْلًا ﴿٥﴾ اِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ الَّيْلِ هِيَ اَشَدُّ وَطْاً وَّاَقْوَمُ قِيْلًا ﴿٦﴾ اِنَّ لَكَ فِي
النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيْلًا ﴿٧﴾ وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ اِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيْلًا ﴿٨﴾
رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٩﴾ وَاصْبِرْ
عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيْلاً ﴿١٠﴾ وَذَرْنِيْ وَالْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ
اُولِي النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهِّلْهُمْ قَلِيْلًا ﴿١١﴾ اِنَّ لَدَيْنَآ اَنْكَالًا وَّجَحِيْمًا ﴿١٢﴾
وَّطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَّعَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿١٣﴾ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْاَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ
وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيْبًا مَّهِيْلًا ﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْكُمْ رَسُوْلًا
شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَآ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُوْلًا ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَصٰى فِرْعَوْنُ
الرَّسُوْلَ فَاَخَذْنٰهُ اَخْذًا وَّبِيْلاً ﴿١٦﴾ فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُوْنَ اِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا
يَّجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيْبًا ﴿١٧﴾ اِلسَّمَآءُ مُنْفَطِرٌۢ بِهٖ كَانَ وَعْدُهٗ مَفْعُوْلًا

﴿١٨﴾ اِنَّ هٰذِهٖ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۚ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا ﴿١٩﴾ اِنَّ
رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ اَنَّكَ تَقُوْمُ اَدْنٰى مِنْ ثُلُثَيِ الَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهٗ وَثُلُثَهٗ وَطَآئِفَةٌ مِّنَ
الَّذِيْنَ مَعَكَ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُقَدِّرُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ؕ عَلِمَ اَنْ لَّنْ تُحْصُوْهُ فَتَابَ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَاقْرَءُوْا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْاٰنِ ؕ عَلِمَ اَنْ سَيَكُوْنُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضٰى ۙ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ
يَضْرِبُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ يَبْتَغُوْنَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ ۙ وَآخَرُوْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِيْ
سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۖ فَاقْرَءُوْا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ ۙ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ
وَاَقْرِضُوا اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا ؕ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوْا لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوْهُ
عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا وَّاَعْظَمَ اَجْرًا ؕ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ
رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

O you wrapped up in clothes,* [1] **stand at night (for prayer) except a little** [2] **half of it, or make it a little less,** [3] **or make it a little more; and recite the Qur'ān clearly with *tartīl* (in a distinct and measured tone).** [4] **We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse.** [5] **Truly, rising by night (for prayer of *tahajjud*) is the most effective way to subdue (one's self) and to make speech more upright.** [6] **Surely, in daytime, you have a lengthy work to do.** [7] **And remember the name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion.** [8] **He is the Lord of the East and the West; there is no god but He; so take Him for (your) Guardian.** [9] **And bear patiently what they say, and part with them in a beautiful manner.** [10] **And leave Me (to deal) with the deniers, the people of luxury, and give them respite for a while.** [11] **Surely with Us are fetters and**

* The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed in this verse with reference to a particular style of wrapping himself in his clothes. The first event of this kind occurred when the Holy Prophet ﷺ received first revelation in the cave of Ḥirā'. Being his first experience, he felt it very hard, and was caught by a shivery cold, and once he reached home, he asked his blessed wife Khadijah رضي الله عنها to wrap him in a blanket which she did. Some narrations have reported another event: When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was accused, by the pagans of Makkah, of being a magician who separated between friends, he felt aggrieved, and wrapped himself in his clothes out of grief. Addressing him with reference to these events is a loving style adopted by Allah Ta'ala to console him. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

flaming fire, [12] and food that chokes, and a painful punishment, [13] on the Day when the earth and the mountains will quake, and the mountains will turn into a slipping heap of sand. [14] We have sent to you a messenger, as a witness over you, just as We sent a messenger to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). [15] Then, Fir'aun disobeyed the messenger; so We seized him with a severe seizure. [16] So, if you disbelieve, how will you save yourself from a day that will turn the small boys into grey-headed old men, [17] whereby the sky will burst apart. His promise has to be fulfilled. [18] Indeed, this is a reminder; so let anyone who so wishes, adopt a way to his Lord. [19]

Your Lord knows that you stand (in prayer) for nearly two thirds of the night, and (at times) for half of it, and (at times) for one third of it, and (so do) a group of those who are with you. And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you cannot do it regularly, therefore He turned to you in mercy. Now, recite as much of the Qur'ān as is easy (for you). He knows that some of you may be sick, and others travelling in the land, seeking the grace of Allah, and yet others fighting in Allah's way. Therefore, recite as much of it as is easy. And establish *ṣalāh*, and pay *zakāh*, and advance to Allah a goodly loan. And whatever good you will send ahead for your own selves, you will find it with Allah much better in condition, and much greater in reward. And seek forgiveness from Allah. Indeed Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [20]

Commentary

يَاَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ 'O you wrapped up in clothes [73:1]'. The word *muzzammil* literally means 'one wrapped up in clothes' and its near-synonym '*muddaththir*' comes in the next Sūrah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed in this verse with reference to a particular style of wrapping himself in his clothes. The first event of this kind occurred when the Holy Prophet ﷺ received first revelation in the cave of Ḥirā'. Being his first experience, he felt it very hard, and was caught by a shivery cold, and once he reached home, he asked his blessed wife Khadījah رضى الله عنها to wrap him in a blanket which she did. A detailed account of this event is reported by Bukhārī in the very first chapter of his book. Then the revelation stopped for some time. Speaking of this temporary break in the revelation [termed as *fatrat-ul-waḥy*], Sayyidnā Jābir رضي الله عنه reports that the

Messenger of Allah ﷺ said in his narrative:

> "Whilst I was walking along, I heard a voice from heaven and I raised up my eyes. Lo! The Angel that had appeared to me in Ḥirā' was sitting on a chair between heaven and earth, and I was struck with awe on account of him and returned home and said, Wrap me up, wrap me up [*zammilūnī, zammilūnī*]. Then Allah revealed the first five verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir (chapter 74)." [Bukhārī and Muslim]

According to this narrative, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is affectionately addressed as 'O you, enveloped in a mantle,' whereas in this Sūrah he is addressed as 'O you wrapped up in clothes'. Both forms of address are used affectionately and endearingly to console him. The latter title of address '*muzzammil*' as it appears in this Sūrah could probably be connected to another incident (referred to in the footnote) but it, nonetheless, shows deep love and affection for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]. Having addressed him with this special title, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is told in the following verses that praying to Allah in the stillness of night [*ṣalāt-ut-tahajjud*] will prepare him for the heavy task entrusted to him. Some details of the night-prayer have also been set out.

Injunctions Pertaining to *Ṣalāt-ut-Tahajjud* and its Abrogation

Reading into the titles *muzzammil* and *muddaththir* a consensus of scholarly opinion assigns the revelation of this Surah to the earliest period when the five daily prayers had not become obligatory. They were prescribed on the night of Holy Prophet's ﷺ Ascent to heavens. [*mi'rāj*].

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى says, on the basis of *Ahadith* reported by Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah Ṣiddīqah رضی الله عنها and others, that 'night-prayer' was compulsory for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the entire Muslim community until the five prayers were not prescribed.

This verse not only prescribes the night-prayer but it also prescribes to stand up in prayer from at least one quarter of the night, because the verse under comment basically commanded to stand up all night to pray except a little portion of it.

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى says, on the basis of narration of *Aḥādīth*, that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the noble Companions ﷺ, in compliance with this command, spent the major portion of the night in *tahajjud*, so

much so that their feet would swell and this exertion caused hardship and difficulty to them. This situation continued for a year. After that, towards the end of the Sūrah, the following injunction was revealed:

فَاقْرَءُوْا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ

'...Therefore, recite as much of it as is easy_[73:20]'

It repealed the obligation of staying up for a long time, and granted them concession and permission to stay up for prayer as much as they could easily manage. This is transmitted by Abū Dāwūd and Nasa'ī on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that when the five prescribed prayers became obligatory on the night of *mi'rāj*, the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* was abrogated. It was, however, retained as *sunnah*, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ performed it most regularly. Most of the blessed Companions ﷺ were regular with their *tahajjud* as well. [Maẓharī] Let us now analyze the wordings of the verses.

قُمِ الَّيْلَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا 'stand at night (for prayer) except a little_[73:2]'. The word *al-lail* with the definite article 'al' connotes 'the entire night', signifying that he should stay up the whole night for prayer except a little portion of it. As the word 'little' is indefinite, the verse further clarifies:

نِّصْفَهٗٓ اَوِ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيْلًا 'half of it, or make it a little less, [3] or اَوْزِدْ عَلَيْهِ make it a little more [73:4]'. This is explicative of the exception 'except a little'. A question may be raised here that 'a little' cannot be 'half'. The answer is that the earlier portion of the night is spent in the prayer at *maghrib* and *'ishā'*. 'Half' then refers to the half of the rest of the night. Its total in relation to the whole night amounts to 'a little'. The verse permits to reduce it a little less than half and it also permits to add to it a little more than half. Thus it was compulsory to stay up at least for a little over one fourth of a night for prayer.

وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَرْتِيْلًا '...and recite the Qur'ān clearly with *tartīl* (in a distinct and measured tone). [73:4]'. The word *tartīl* , according to Imām Rāghib as explicated in *al-Mufradāt*, originally means 'to put together and arrange well the component parts of a word and speech and make it distinct'. The purport of the verse is to say that the Qur'ān must not be recited in haste, but in a leisurely manner, distinctly, deliberately and in well-measured tone. At the same time, it is necessary to reflect on its meaning and

message. [Maẓharī]. The clause *wa rattil* is grammatically conjoined to *qumil lail* and signifies what is required to be done in tahajjud prayer. Although it comprises many components like *tasbīḥ*, *rukū'* (bowing), *sujud* (prostration) and so on, the verse indicates that the basic component of prayer is recitation of the Qur'ān. The authentic Traditions bear testimony to the fact that the *tahajjud* prayer of the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be prolonged very much. The noble Companions and their pupils followed the same pattern.

Ruling [1]

The verse under comment clarifies that the recitation of the Qur'ān is required to be with *tartīl* [distinct recitation in well-measured tone]. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ recitation fulfilled the requirements of *tartīl*. Some people inquired from Sayyidah 'Umm Salamah رضی اللہ عنہا about the Holy Prophet's ﷺ recitation of Qur'ān in night-prayers. She emulated his recitation in which every single letter was clear and distinct. [Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā'ī - as quoted by Maẓharī].

Ruling [2]

Tartīl includes slow rhythmic recitation and beautification of the voice while reciting. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضی اللہ عنہ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Allah does not listen to any recitation as much as he listens to the recitation of a Prophet who recites with a beautiful voice." [Maẓharī].

Sayyidnā 'Alqamah رضی اللہ عنہ saw a person reciting with a beautiful voice and he exclaimed:

لقد رتّل القراٰن فداہ ابی واُمّی

"He has recited the Qur'an with *tartīl*: May my parents be sacrificed to him!" [Qurṭubī].

In short, *tartīl* basically signifies that the letters and the words must be pronounced clearly and distinctly that will help understanding the Qur'ān, and paying due care to its meaning. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ reports that Allah's Messenger ﷺ passed by a person who was reciting a verse of the Qur'ān and weeping. He said to the people, 'Have you heard of the command of Allah' وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَرْتِيْلًا '...and recite the Qur'ān clearly with *tartīl* (in a distinct and measured tone). [73:4]'? This is *tartīl* which this person is doing. [Qurṭubī]

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِىْ عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيْلًا ('We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse... 73:5)' The word *thaqīl* means 'heavy' and the phrase 'weighty discourse' refers to the Qur'ān, because the Qur'ānic teachings of lawful and unlawful are permanently binding and carrying them out is the weightiest task for human nature, except those for whom Allah makes it easier. According to oft-quoted *Aḥādīth*, whenever a revelation descended upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he went into a trance and felt a peculiar sensation, so that even on an extremely cold day drops of sweat fell from his forehead, and he felt his body has become heavier. The Qur'ānic revelation being 'a weighty discourse', his paroxysm was due to this sensation. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ received revelation while he was on his riding animal, it would begin to move the bottom of its neck intensely. [Bukhārī and others].

The verse under comment prescribes *tahajjud* prayer on man, so that he may become accustomed to the difficulty of waking at night. This is a struggle against excess sleep and comfort of the carnal self. This exercise will make it easier to abide by the injunctions contained in the 'weighty discourse', that is, the Holy Qur'ān.

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ الَّيْلِ ("Truly, rising by night [for prayer of *tahajjud*] is the most effective way to subdue (one's self) and to make speech more upright.... 73:6). The word *nāshi'ah*, on the grammatical measure of *'āfiyah,* is an infinitive noun which signifies 'to rise by night for prayer'. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها said that *nāshi'at-ul-lail* means 'to rise by night for night-prayer after sleeping'. According to this definition, *nāshi'at-ul-lail* refers to *tahajjud* prayer. Furthermore, the word *tahajjud* itself, literally, means 'to sleep at night and then wake up to perform the prayer'. Ibn Kaisān رحمه الله تعالى has said that prayer at the later part of the night is called *nāshi'at-ul-lail.* Ibn Zaid رحمه الله تعالى says that performing prayer at any part of the night is *nāshi'at-ul-lail.* Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى says that any prayer after the 'Ishā' prayer is *nāshi'at-ul-lail.* Ibn Abī Mulaikah رحمه الله تعالى says that he asked Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Zubair ﷺ about the meaning of *nāshi'at-ul-lail,* they replied as follows: الّيل كلّها ناشئة (The entire night is *nāshi'ah*." - Maẓharī)

There is no conflict in these interpretations. The point is that the terms *nāshi'ah* of the night and *qiyām* of the night are general, and may refer to any hour of night. Thus the two terms apply equally to

performing night-prayer in any part of the night, especially the one performed after *'Ishā'* prayer as explained by Sayyidnā Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى. However, the constant practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that of the overwhelming majority of the Companions and their pupils, and that of the righteous predecessors of the *'Ummah* was that they performed this prayer in the later part of the night after waking from sleep, and therefore it is more virtuous, more meritorious and attracts more blessings. Performing any *nafl* [voluntary] prayer after *'Ishā'* prayer fulfills the *sunnah* requirement of *nashi'ah* of the night and *qiyām* of the night.

هِىَ اَشَدُّ وَطْاً (...is the most effective way to subdue (one's self) and to make speech more upright... 73:6). The word *waṭ'an,* with the letter *waw* carrying *fatḥ* [=a], is an infinitive which means 'to subdue' or 'to suppress'. Given this meaning, the sense is that this time of night helps one to suppress his evil desires and keep them under control. This meaning is adopted by Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thānawī رحمه الله تعالى, and the translation of the text is based on this interpretation. In another *qirā'ah* (version), however, the word is pronounced *'wiṭā'an'*. It is an infinitive that means 'to conform'. On another occasion in the Qur'ān, we come across the following verse wherein a verb derived from this root is contained. The word in that verse is used in the same sense, thus:

لِيُوَاطِئُوْا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ

'...so that they may conform (only) to the number of what Allah has sanctified - [9:37]'

Leading authorities on Tafsīr, like Ibn Zaid and Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, have interpreted the word in the same sense here. Ibn Zaid رضي الله عنه said that getting up in the night for prayer is the most effective means of making the heart, eye, ear and tongue to mutually correspond and conform. Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said that the phrase means that during this time there is the closest degree of conformity and harmony between the ear and the heart. This is because there is no noise at the time of night when most people are asleep and one will not be disturbed as one is during the daytime. At night time when the tongue recites the Qur'ān, the ears will be conducive to listening to the recitation with due concentration, and the heart will be conducive to understanding and considering its meaning and message .

وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا (And to make speech more upright - 73:6) The word *aqwām* means 'more upright'. The verse signifies that the recitation of the Qur'ān is more upright and concentrated, because during the night there are no noises and commotion to distract the heart or the mind.

In sum, the purport of the verse is to put forward the wisdom underlying the injunction of the 'night-prayer' for the common people. The preceding verse put forward its wisdom for the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا

'We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse.[73:5]'.

The 'weighty discourse' was concerned specifically with the Holy Prophet ﷺ as it was revealed to him. But for common people, Night-Prayer has two characteristics: [1] bringing harmony between the heart and the tongue; and [2] peace of mind - making it easier to recite the Qur'ān.

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا (Surely, in daytime, you have a lengthy work to do... 73:7). The word *sabḥun*, literally means, 'to flow, walk or move about' from which we also get the sense 'of swimming in the water' because when a swimmer swims in the water, he moves about in it freely without any obstruction. Here the word signifies 'long chain of engagements in the day' which refers to multifarious duties to be performed with alacrity, such as educating the people, preaching to them, reforming humanity, performing domestic chores, discharging social responsibilities and moving about to many other tasks and obligations .

The current verse explicates the third point of wisdom as to why night-prayer was enjoined. This relates both to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the general body of the Muslim community. During the day the Holy Prophet ﷺ as well as other people have a long chain of engagements for which they disperse and move about as explained in the foregoing paragraph. As a result, it is difficult for them to concentrate on their worshipping activity. The night should be reserved for this purpose. A person should sleep according to his need and perform his night-prayer as well.

A Special Note

Jurists have said that the verse under comment confirms that scholars

and saintly guides, who are engaged in the service of education, training and human reform, should render their services during the day. It is better to reserve the night for Divine worship and devotional activities. The practice of the righteous scholars and predecessors bear testimony to this fact. If a temporary need arises to serve the cause of education and propagation at night, it may be carried out to the degree of necessity, but this would be an exception. The practice of many scholars and jurists confirm this exception .

وَاذْكُرِاسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيْلًا (And remember the name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion... 73:8). The word *tabattul*, literally, means 'to cut off oneself from entire creation to focus attention solely on the Creator to detach oneself from worldly things and devote oneself exclusively and sincerely to the service of Allah' The sentence: وَاذْكُرِاسْمَ رَبِّكَ (And remember the name of your Lord...73:8) is grammatically conjoined to the sentence: قُمِ الَّيْلَ (Stand at night [for prayer].... 73:2) which enjoins upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ to perform the night-prayer, and incidentally his attention is drawn in the following verse to special devotional activities in the course of the day: إِنَّ لَكَ فِى النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيْلًا 'Surely, in daytime, you have a lengthy work to do. [73:7]' But the verse 8 enjoins a devotional activity (remembering Allah) that can be performed at any time of day or night. In fact, it can be performed at all times and under all circumstances. Since it is inconceivable that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would never remember Allah, the purport of enjoining *Dhikr* (Remembrance of Allah) is to emphasise ' keeping to it consistently' in the sense that there should be no laxity in it. [Maẓharī]. This is possible only if 'remembering Allah' is taken in its widest possible sense to include 'Reciting His name with tongue', 'Remembrance by heart' and also 'keeping one's body engaged in complying with the commands of Allah'. A narration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah Ṣiddīqah رضى الله عنها reports the following:

كَان يذكر الله على كلّ حين

"The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to remember Allah at all times."

This Ḥadīth is correct in terms of the wider concept of 'rememberance of Allah' just explained above. Obviously, the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not make *dhikr* by his tongue when answering the call of nature as Aḥādīth distinctly confirm this, but *Dhikr* by heart is possible at all times. There

are, however, two types of *Dhikr* by heart: [1] It may be done through 'imagined words'; [2] by reflecting and pondering on the Divine attributes of perfection. [Shaikh Thanawī].

The next injunction in this verse is:

تَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا '..and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion. [73:8]'. In other words, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is to detach himself from worldly things and devote himself exclusively and sincerely to Allah. The general import of the verse imparts the injunction that when worshipping Allah, no partners should be associated with Him and the total worship and devotion should be solely for Him. In all his actions and movements, he should single out Allah for reliance. He should not take any creature as possessing the power of benefit and harm or as possessing the power of granting wishes and solving problems. Sayyidnā Ibn Zaid رضي الله عنه said that *tabattul* signifies 'to abandon the world and what is in it and focus attention on what is with Allah'. [Maẓharī]. The *tabattul* which this verse enjoins is completely different from the concept and practice of monasticism which the Qur'ān denounces elsewhere, thus:

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةَ ابْتَدَعُوهَا

'...As for monasticism, it was invented by them_[57:27]'

and a Ḥadīth denounces it thus:

لارهبانية فى الاسلام

"There is no monasticism in Islam."

Rahbāniyyah or 'monasticism', in the technical language of Sharī'ah, signifies 'to abandon the world and sever all ties which involves the giving up of all pleasures and all lawful and pure things, believing that doing so is 'worship' and thinking that without avoiding them one would not be able to attain the good pleasure of Allah. It also means to sever human relationships in such a manner that human rights are not taken care of or they are violated. This verse enjoins a different type of *tabattul* or severance of relationship. It means that one's relationship with human beings should not overpower his relationship with Allah - whether in terms of belief or in terms of practice. Such a detachment is not contradictory to any business relations, or social contracts and transactions, like marriage and family ties. In fact, they can be combined. *Tabattul,* in this sense, is the characteristic of all Prophets عليهم السلام,

especially that of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Their lives bear ample testimony to this type of *tabattul* which the pious elders alternatively term as *Ikhlāṣ* (sincerity). [Maẓharī]

An Important Note

In the matter of 'Allah's Remembrance' and 'detachment from the world', the venerable Ṣūfis, whether belonging to the earlier generation or later generation, have always been forward. They said that there are only two steps with which they are exerting their effort to cover the distance and conquer the path day and night. The first step is to detach themselves from the creation and the second step is to reach Allah [i.e. their destination]. The two steps are inseparable, in that where one is operational the other must operate; and if one does not operate, the other will not operate either. The two steps have been stated as two conjoined sentences, thus: وَاذْكُرِاسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ اِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيْلًا 'And remember the name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion. [73:8]'. In this context, *dhikr* Allah refers to constant Remembrance of Allah where there should be no failing, and at no time there should be forgetfulness. This *maqām* 'station' in Ṣūfī terminology is referred to as *wuṣūl ila-Allah* 'reaching out to Allah. The first statement states the second step and the second statement states the first step. Thus the statements state the order in reverse probably because in practice *tabattul,* in the sense given above, is prior to *wuṣūl ila-Allah* which is achieved after the operation of the former. The main object of a *sālik* (the spiritual traveller) is to achieve the second step, therefore the naturally occurring order has been changed and remembrance of Allah has been mentioned first. This also is meant to show the importance and virtue of remembrance of Allah. How well Shaikh Sa'dī رحمه الله تعالیٰ has versified the two steps:

تعلق حجاب است و بے حاصلی......☆......چوپیوند ها بُگسلی واصلی

Worldly relationship is a barrier and brings no (eternal) benefit.
When you abandon these relations, you will be the one who reaches out to Allah.

Remembrance of Allah through Repetition of His Personal Name

The verse under comment whilst enjoining *dhikrullah* (remembrance of Allah) has referred to it as 'remembrance of the name of Allah by saying: وَاذْكُرِاسْمَ رَبِّكَ 'And remember the name of your Lord - [73:8]' and not وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ 'And remember your Lord'.

This indicates that the repetition of Allah's personal name 'Allah, Allah' is also desired and required form of *dhikr* and worship. [Maẓharī]. Some scholars say that such repetition of His personal name is an 'innovation' (*bid'ah*), but this opinion is not correct. And Allah knows best!

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيْلًا (He is the Lord of the East and the West; there is no god but He; so take Him for [your] Guardian...73:9). The word *wakīl*, lexicologically, refers to a 'person who has been given a task to do'. 'To take Allah as guardian' means that all matters and affairs should be entrusted to Allah. Technically, this is called *tawakkul* 'trust'.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is given several injunctions in this Sūrah. This is the fifth injunction. Imām Ya'qūb Karkhī رحمه الله تعالى says that from the beginning of the Sūrah up to this verse there is reference to the *maqāmāt sulūk* 'journeying or a methodical travelling along the spiritual path through the various states and stations under the direction of a spiritual master or adept'. The references are as follows: [1] solitude at night to worship Allah; [2] preoccupation with Qur'ān; [3] constant Remembrance of Allah; [4] severance of relationship with "everything-other-than-Allah, and [5] total trust in Allah. Preceding the last injunction about trust, Allah's attribute is given, thus: رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ 'He is the Lord of the East and the West__[73:9]'. In other words, Allah is the Cherisher and Sustainer of the entire universe. He is responsible to fulfill the needs of all from the beginning to the end. He alone can assist in all matters. Just as He has been singled out for worship, so should He be singled out for reliance, and full trust must be put in Him. Anyone who trusts and relies on Allah will never be deprived of his needs as the Qur'ān puts it:

وَمَنْ يَّتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهٗ

> '...And whoever places his trust in Allah, He is sufficient for him. __[65:3]'

The Correct Concept of *Tawakkul* [Trust]

Trust in Allah does not imply for anyone to avoid the apparent means of acquiring livelihood, or giving up the normal ways of saving oneself from any affliction. The ways and means that Allah has created for a particular purpose should not be abandoned while placing total trust in Allah. On the contrary, in order to achieve our purpose it is necessary for

us to utilize the God-given power and causes at our disposal to the fullest extent, but we should not repose blind faith in material causes and means. But having adopted actions of choice, the result should then be left with Allah whose will is the Ultimate Cause of everything.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself has explained *tawakkul* in this way. Imām Baghawī, in his Sharḥ-us-Sunnah, and Baihaqī, in his Shu'ab-ul-'Īmān, have cited the following Ḥadīth:

ان نفسا لن تموت حتّٰى تستكمل رزقها، الاَ فاتّقُوْا اللّٰه واجملوا فى الطلب

> "Jibra'īl عليه السلام has inspired me with the thought that no person will ever die until he receives, in full, his sustenance that Allah has decreed for him. Therefore, fear Allah and be moderate in your search."

In other words, we should not be over-absorbed in quest for our needs so deeply that the attention of the heart is totally focused on the material causes and means. Instead, after adopting the ways and means to fulfill our needs, we should repose our total trust in and reliance upon Allah in the sense that without His will, no cause can bring any effect.

Tirmidhī transmits a Ḥadīth on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "*Zuhd* (Renunciation of the world) does not mean to turn lawful things into unlawful or squander the wealth Allah has given you. Renunciation of the world means to have more faith in the things that are in Allah's hands than what are in your hands." [Maẓharī]

وَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيْلاً (And bear patiently what they say, and part with them in a beautiful manner...73:10). According to Imām Karkhī رحمه الله تعالىٰ, this is the sixth injunction given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he should bear with patience and fortitude the jibes, opposition and persecution of his enemies. Perfect patience is the supreme station of *sulūk* (methodical travelling along the spiritual path). Spiritual reformers expend their entire strength, energy and life in reforming the deviant people. In return, they have to hear vile language, they are persecuted and wronged in many different ways. In return, they exercise *ṣabr* (patience) in a beautiful manner. In other words, they do not even entertain the thought of revenge. This is the supreme station, which in Ṣūfī terminology, is attained only after *fanā' kāmil:* 'complete negation of

selfish desires'.

وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا (...and part with them in a beautiful manner...73:10). The word *hajr*, literally, denotes 'to give up something in a state of grief, anger and temper'. The verse means that rejecters of Truth utter words that hurt. He should not take revenge, but maintain no relations with them either. At the time of severing relations, it is natural for man to utter words of complaint and disgust. Therefore, Allah's Messenger ﷺ is told to cut off relations with the rejecters of Truth, but he must maintain his dignity and integrity. Hence, the verse contains the grammatically restricted cognate accusative, *hajran jamīlan*, 'in a beautiful manner'. The high status and the exalted standard of character require that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should restrain himself from making any abusive remarks at the deniers of Truth.

Some scholars of Tafsīr say that the injunction of this verse is repealed by verses of *jihād* which were revealed later on. But a careful analysis indicates that the injunction is not repealed. The above verses enjoin patience and steadfastness in the face of what the enemies say and cutting off from them courteously. This is not in conflict with verses that deal with reproof, punishment and armed struggle that were revealed subsequently. The injunction of this verse is applicable at all times and under all circumstances, whereas *jihād* is reproof and punishment, and is a specific injunction to be applied under specific conditions. Islamic *jihād* and armed struggle is not a matter of taking revenge or expression of anger, which could be in conflict with patience and fortitude or courteous severance. It is purely acting on the Divine command as is patience and courteous severance under general circumstances. Up to this point the Holy Prophet ﷺ was commanded to be steadfast and to abstain from revenge. The next verse, reprimands the deniers of Truth that instead of being grateful to Allah for "ease and plenty" provided for them, they reject the Divine Message:

وَذَرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ أُولِي النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهِّلْهُمْ قَلِيلًا (And leave Me [to deal] with the deniers, the people of luxury, and give them respite for a while....73:11). The 'deniers' are referred to as 'the people of luxury'. The word *na'mah*', the first letter [n] bearing *fatḥ* [=a], signifies 'ease and plenty; abundance of wealth and children'. This indicates that people who live a life of ease, plenty and luxury can only be the ones who deny the Hereafter. These

things do often fall to the lot of the believers, but they do not intoxicate them. Therefore, even when they live a life of luxury, their hearts are never, at any time, empty of the thought of the Hereafter. Only the deniers of the Hereafter will live a life of luxury that is neglectful of the Hereafter.

إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنكَالًا وَّجَحِيمًا وَّطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَّعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا (Surely with Us are fetters and flaming fire, and food that chokes, and a painful punishment...73:12-13). The terrible punishment of the Hereafter is described in these verses. First, there is the mention of *ankāl* which is the plural of *nakāl*. It denotes 'fetter, chain, shackle'. Then, there is the mention of 'flaming fire'. Then, verse [13] describes the 'choking food' the inmates of Hell will be given to eat.

The word *ghuṣṣah* literally denotes 'a thing by which one is choked'. For example, a morsel may block the throat in such a way as it can neither be swallowed nor can it be brought up. The inmates of Hell will be given *ḍarī'* and *zaqqūm* (thorny fruits) to eat. These fruits fit the description.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said: "In it will be thorns of fire that will choke." [God save us!]. The verse says in conclusion: وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا (...and a painful punishment...73:13).

Having described specific forms of punishment, this description is general - indicating that there will be many more horrible and terrible forms of punishment which man cannot even imagine. [O Allah, save us from all forms of punishment!]

The Righteous Elders' Fear of the Hereafter

Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Ibn 'Adiyy and Baihaqī record a narration that a person heard this verse and fell fainted. One day Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى was fasting. When the food was brought to him at the time of *ifṭār* (ending the fast), this verse occurred in his mind and he could not eat. As a result, he sent it away. The following day he was fasting again. The same thing happened in the evening and he sent the food away. On the third day the same thing happened. So, his sons went to Thābit Bunānī, Yazīd Ḍabbāī, and Yaḥyā Al-Bakkā' and recounted the story. All three personalities went to Ḥasan and insisted on his eating something. At their insistence, the latter ate a little. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيبًا مَّهِيلًا ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ
رَسُولًا ۙ شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَصَىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُولَ
فَأَخَذْنَاهُ أَخْذًا وَبِيلًا ﴿١٦﴾ فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِن كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا ﴿١٧﴾

(on the Day when the earth and the mountains will quake, and the mountains will turn into a slipping heap of sand. [14] We have sent to you a messenger, as a witness over you, just as We sent a messenger to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). [15] Then, Fir'aun disobeyed the messenger; so We seized him with a severe seizure. [16] So, if you disbelieve, how will you save yourself from a day that will turn the small boys into grey-headed old men...17).

These verses describe the horrors and terrors of the Day of Resurrection. Verse [14] describes that the punishment will take place on the Day when the earth and mountains will shake and the mountains will be reduced to a heap of dust or shifting dunes. Thereafter, reference is made to the story of Mūsā عليه السلام and Fir'aun in order to threaten the pagans of Makkah. Allah sent a Messenger, Muḥammad ﷺ, to bear witness against the pagans of Makkah just as He sent a Messenger, Mūsā عليه السلام, to Fir'aun. But Fir'aun disobeyed Mūsā عليه السلام and Allah seized him with terrible severity right in this world. Likewise, if the pagans of Makkah persist stubbornly in their pagan conduct, they too can be seized similarly with terrible severity in this very world. Towards the conclusion, the verse says that if no torment is inflicted in this world, no one can escape the horrors and terrors and length of the Day of Resurrection that will turn the children grey. This could be a metaphor for the most calamitous happenings which bring about disastrous changes. But some scholars say that this is a description of reality, in that the Day of Resurrection will be so long that a little child will grow old. [Qurṭubī and Rūḥ].

The Obligatory Nature of *Tahajjud Prayer* Abrogated

At the beginning of the Sūrah, the command 'stand at night (for prayer)' prescribed the night-prayer for Allah's Messenger as well as for the general body of Muslims. It was also obligatory for the prayer to be long, but they had a choice in its length. They had to pray for half the night or one-third of the night or two-thirds of the night. A group of noble Companions in the performance of this duty mostly followed the *'azīmah* (preferred original rule of law). As a result, they spent almost two-thirds

of the night in prayer. They performed this prayer every night. During the day they would invite people to Islam and preach and attend to their personal needs. Most of the Companions were either labourers or businessmen. The Messenger's as well as the Companions' feet would swell on account of the long prayers. Waking at night was extremely difficult, and Allah was fully aware of the entire set-up, but it was pre-decreed in His knowledge that the difficulty is temporary and a passing phase. The purpose of this exercise is *riyāḍah* 'ascetic discipline' of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. In the initial stages, they were in a condition of disequilibrium. Therefore, they were required to exert themselves in spiritual struggle and ascetic discipline, thus:

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا 'We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse. [73:5]'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was going to be handed over the service of the Qur'ān which is much more difficult than this ascetic discipline. According to the Pre-eternal knowledge of Allah, when the ascetic discipline was completed and with His grace perfect balance was attained, asceticism was replaced by moderation. As a result, the obligatory nature of night-prayer was repealed. According to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما, the above verses merely cancelled the obligatory nature of night-prayer, but the basic *tahajjud* prayer remained intact as obligatory. When the five daily prayers were prescribed on the night of *mi'rāj*, the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* prayer too was cancelled. And Allah knows best!

Apparently, this obligation was cancelled for Allah's Messenger as well as for the entire 'Ummah. However, it is still a supererogatory and laudable deed in the sight of Allah. Furthermore, there is no time or recitation constraint. Every person may perform the prayer according to his own ability in the time available to him and recite the Qur'ān as much of it as is easy for him .

The Concept of Abrogation in Sharī'ah

Legislating laws and abrogating them to proclaim new ones in their place is a routine practice in human governments and institutions. However, abrogation occurs sometimes in a piece of human legislation because the legislators did not fully comprehend the situation at the time of formulating a certain law, and are forced to amend it when they realize that the situation has changed and the law is no longer applicable in the

new circumstances. At other times, a law might be proclaimed in the government gazette in keeping with the prevailing circumstances, but the legislators might not have foreseen that the circumstances might change. When that happens, the old law will have to be repealed and a new one will have to be legislated and promulgated. It is inconceivable that these two forms of repeal will ever apply to Divine injunctions.

A third situation is that when the legislator formulates a law, he foresees that in time to come conditions will change, as a result the law will no longer apply *in toto* in the changed condition. So, when the conditions alter, as the legislator had foreseen, he legislates a new law and makes it public as he had forethought. This is the only form of abrogation that can take place, and has been taking place in Divine injunctions. It has always been the case that a certain piece of Divine law was intended, from the very beginning, to remain in force for a limited time, but Divine Wisdom chose not to disclose this time limit from the people. Because of the general wordings of the legislation, the general community of people thought it was an immutable law whereas Allah had pre-decreed it as a temporary law for a limited period of time. When its temporary period was over, the law was with withdrawn. People took this as the abrogation of law whereas in reality it merely defined the time period. In other words, at that time it is made publicly known to the people that the law was not an immutable one, but promulgated for a limited period of time. Thus the period is now over and the law is no longer applicable .

There are many verses of the Qur'ān that have been repealed, and the commoners find it difficult to grasp the wisdom underlying the repeal, but the foregoing explanation should allay the difficulty. However, the question remains: Was *tahajjud* prayer specially obligatory on the Holy Prophet ﷺ after the verse under comment was revealed? Some scholars of Tafsīr answer it in the affirmative and they base their argument on the following verse:

وَمِنَ الَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهٖ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ

'And during the night, wake up for *Ṣalāh*, an additional prayer for you [17:79]'

This verse prescribes *tahajjud* as an additional prayer specially for the

Holy Prophet ﷺ. The word *nāfilah* literally denotes 'additional', meaning 'additional obligation'. But according to the overwhelming majority, the correct view is that the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* prayer has been abrogated for Allah's Messenger, as well as the general body of Muslims. However, it still remains an act of supererogation for all. The above verse contains the phrase نَافِلَةً لَّكَ *nāfilatan lak* 'an additional prayer for you'. The word *nāfilah* is used in its technical sense of *nafl* 'supererogatory'. If *tahajjud* is a *nafl* prayer for all, then it is not clear why addressing the Holy Prophet ﷺ the verse adds *lak* 'for you' as if it is a distinctively voluntary act for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 5/pp533-543 for fuller explanation, especially pp536-537 for whether *tahajjud* is a mere *nafl* (voluntary) or *sunnah mu'akkadah* (the emphasised practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ)

The verse that abrogates the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* prayer starts from -

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ

'Your Lord knows__[73:20]'

and ends at - فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ '...Now, recite as much of the Qur'ān as is easy (for you) [73:20]' This verse was revealed one year or eight months after the initial verses of this Sūrah. Thus the obligatory nature of night-prayer was abrogated after a year. Musnad of Aḥmad, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah and Nasa'ī record a narration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رحمه الله تعالى who stated that at the commencement of this Sūrah, Allah had prescribed the night-prayer. The Messenger of Allah and the blessed Companions constantly and consistently carried out the obligation for a year. Allah held back the last part of the Sūrah in the sky for twelve months. It was revealed after a year which abrogated the obligatory status of night-prayer and made concession - reducing its status to supererogation. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

عَلِمَ أَنْ لَّنْ تُحْصُوْهُ (...He knows that you cannot do it regularly...73:20). The word *iḥṣā'* literally denotes 'to count'. Some commentators interpret this verse as follows: Allah had not fixed the exact time for night-prayer. They were given the option of choosing time between one-third of the night to two thirds of it. But when the Companions were preoccupied with the prayer, it was difficult for them to calculate whether they had stayed up

half the night, or one-third of the night, or two-thirds of the night, because in those days there were no watches or clocks to measure the time. Even if there were, it was not in keeping with their conditions of involvement in prayers to look at the time repeatedly. They would be absorbed in their prayers, so as to be oblivious to their environment. This is the significance of the phrase *lan tuḥṣūhu.* Other scholars say that the word *iḥṣā'* connotes 'the act of counting', signifying that Allah knows that you will not be able to keep count of the constant prayers during the lengthy hours and hours of sleep. The word *iḥṣā'* is also used in this sense, as is used in a Ḥadīth in connection with the beautiful names of Allah, thus:

من احصاها دخل الجنّه

"He who keeps count of them will enter Paradise"

meaning, to act fully according to the attributes and qualities of Allah, as indicated in His beautiful names. For fuller explanation, please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 5/pp272-273 under the following verse:

وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا

'...And if you count the bounties of Allah, you cannot count them all. [14:34]'

فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ (...therefore He turned to you in mercy...73:20). The word *taubah* originally means 'to turn'. Repentance for sins is also called taubah in Arabic, because the sinner turns away from his past sins and crimes. In this context, the word simply means 'to turn', that is, Allah took back the obligatory nature of the injunction of night-prayer. Then He says: فَاقْرَءُوا مَاتَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْاٰنِ (...Now, recite as much of the Qur'ān as is easy ... 73:20). That is, recite in *tahajjud* prayer which is no longer obligatory. It is supererogatory enjoying the status of *sunnah* or *mustaḥab*. No particular number of verses has been fixed for recitation of the Holy Qur'ān in *tahajjud* prayer. So a worshipper may recite as much of it as is easy for him. This verse answers many legal questions that are available in books of jurisprudence.

وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَقْرِضُوا اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا (And establish *ṣalāh*, and pay *zakāh*, and advance to Allah a goodly loan....73:20). According to majority of the commentators, *ṣalāh* in this context refers to the five prescribed

prayers that were made obligatory on the Night of Ascent (*Mi'rāj*). This indicates that the night-prayer was obligatory for a year. In the meantime, the nocturnal journey took place, and the five daily prayers were prescribed. After that, the above verses were revealed and the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* prayer was abrogated. Towards the conclusion of the Sūrah, where it speaks of establishment of prayer, it refers to the five prescribed prayers. [Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī and Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ].

وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ (...and pay zakah....73:20). *Zakāh* refers to the prescribed *zakāh*. However, it is popularly understood that *zakāh* was prescribed two years after migration to Madīnah whereas this verse is Makkī and, as was said earlier, a consensus of scholarly opinion assigns the revelation of this Sūrah to the earliest period of the call. In response, some commentators express the view that this particular verse was revealed in Madīnah. Ibn Kathīr, however, says that *zakāh* was prescribed in the earliest days of Islam, although its details, like exemption limit and the rate, were fixed in the second year of migration at Madīnah. Even if the verse is treated as Makkī, there should be no problem in taking the word *zakāh* in its technical sense of prescribed *zakāh* as Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī explains in detail. Its full analysis will be found in this author's booklet entitled '*Niẓām-e-Zakāt*'.

وَاَقْرِضُوا اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا (...and advance to Allah a goodly loan....73:20). In other words, spend in the way of Allah as charitable donations. This would be as if one is advancing a loan to Allah who will multiply it many times and reward him most abundantly. This indicates Divine favour and grace towards him, and it also describes that Allah is the richest of all. The loan will not be lost, but will be richly returned. The command for *Zakāh* has already been mentioned previously, therefore advancing a loan to Allah refers, according to most scholars, to other voluntary charitable donations in the cause of Allah as, for instance, spending on friends and relatives or utilizing for entertainment of guests or investing in the service of scholars and righteous people. Some scholars point out that besides the prescribed *Zakāh,* there are other financial obligations imposed on man, such as maintenance of parents, wife and children. Thus the command to pay *zakāh* in verse 20 covers the injunction of paying out the prescribed *Zakāh*, while other financial obligations are covered by the

words: '...advance to Allah a goodly loan [20]'.

وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ (...whatever good you will send ahead for your own selves [73:20]. In other words, if man does good in his lifetime, it is better for him than advising someone else to do the good deed at the time of his death. This advice for doing good on behalf of the deceased includes financial worship and voluntary charitable donations. It also includes prescribed prayers, fasts and other prescribed worship or duties that were missed out or neglected, it is better to pay out the *fidyah* and/or *kaffārah* with one's own hands while he is living and be absolved of the responsibility rather than expecting the heirs to discharge it. They may do it or they may neglect to do it .

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once asked the blessed Companions: "Which of you holds his wealth to be dearer to himself than the wealth of his heirs?" They replied: "O Allah's Messenger, there is not a single one of us who does not hold his wealth to be dearer to himself than the wealth of his heir." Allah's Messenger then said: "Consider carefully what you are saying." They submitted: "This is indeed our considered opinion. We do not know any better." He then said: "The wealth of one of you is only that which he sends forth, and the wealth of his heir is that which he leaves behind." [Ibn Kathīr from Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī and said al-Bukhārī transmitted it, reporting from Ḥafṣ Ibn Ghiyāth and so on].

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Muzzammil
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Muddaththir

(The Enveloped One)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 56 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 56

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ فَاَنْذِرْ ﴿٢﴾ وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ﴿٣﴾ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ﴿٤﴾
وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْثِرُ ﴿٦﴾ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ ﴿٧﴾ فَاِذَا نُقِرَ
فِى النَّاقُوْرِ ﴿٨﴾ فَذٰلِكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّوْمٌ عَسِيْرٌ ﴿٩﴾ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ غَيْرُ يَسِيْرٍ
﴿١٠﴾ ذَرْنِىْ وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيْدًا ﴿١١﴾ وَّجَعَلْتُ لَهٗ مَالًا مَّمْدُوْدًا ﴿١٢﴾
وَّبَنِيْنَ شُهُوْدًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَّمَهَّدْتُّ لَهٗ تَمْهِيْدًا ﴿١٤﴾ ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ اَنْ اَزِيْدَ ﴿١٥﴾
كَلَّا ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ لِاٰيٰتِنَا عَنِيْدًا ﴿١٦﴾ سَاُرْهِقُهٗ صَعُوْدًا ﴿١٧﴾ اِنَّهٗ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ
﴿١٨﴾ فَقُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿١٩﴾ ثُمَّ قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿٢٠﴾ ثُمَّ نَظَرَ ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ
عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ اَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ اِنْ هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُّؤْثَرُ
﴿٢٤﴾ اِنْ هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٥﴾ سَاُصْلِيْهِ سَقَرَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمَاۤ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا سَقَرُ
﴿٢٧﴾ لَا تُبْقِىْ وَلَا تَذَرُ ﴿٢٨﴾ لَوَّاحَةٌ لِّلْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٩﴾ عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ ﴿٣٠﴾
وَمَا جَعَلْنَاۤ اَصْحٰبَ النَّارِ اِلَّا مَلٰۤئِكَةً ۙ وَّمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ اِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا ۙ لِيَسْتَيْقِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْۤا اِيْمَانًا وَّلَا
يَرْتَابَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۙ وَلِيَقُوْلَ الَّذِيْنَ فِىْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ

وَّالْكٰفِرُوْنَ مَاذَآ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ بِهٰذَا مَثَلًا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِىْ
مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُوْدَ رَبِّكَ اِلَّا هُوَ ؕ وَمَا هِىَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٰى لِلْبَشَرِ ﴿٣١﴾
كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرِ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالَّيْلِ اِذْ اَدْبَرَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَالصُّبْحِ اِذَآ اَسْفَرَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اِنَّهَا
لَاِحْدَى الْكُبَرِ ﴿٣٥﴾ نَذِيْرًا لِّلْبَشَرِ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِمَنْ شَآءَ مِنْكُمْ اَنْ يَّتَقَدَّمَ اَوْ يَتَاَخَّرَ
﴿٣٧﴾ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِيْنَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ اِلَّا اَصْحٰبَ الْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٣٩﴾ فِىْ
جَنّٰتٍ ۛ يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِىْ سَقَرَ
﴿٤٢﴾ قَالُوْا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾
وَكُنَّا نَخُوْضُ مَعَ الْخَآئِضِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٤٦﴾ حَتّٰىٓ
اَتٰىنَا الْيَقِيْنُ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشّٰفِعِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ
التَّذْكِرَةِ مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ كَاَنَّهُمْ حُمُرٌ مُّسْتَنْفِرَةٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ
﴿٥١﴾ بَلْ يُرِيْدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ اَنْ يُّؤْتٰى صُحُفًا مُّنَشَّرَةً ﴿٥٢﴾ كَلَّا ؕ بَلْ
لَّا يَخَافُوْنَ الْاٰخِرَةَ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّهٗ تَذْكِرَةٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَمَنْ شَآءَ ذَكَرَهٗ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَا
يَذْكُرُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ هُوَ اَهْلُ التَّقْوٰى وَاَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ﴿٥٦﴾

O you, enveloped in a mantle, [1] stand up and warn, [2] and pronounce the greatness of your Lord, [3] and purify your clothes, [4] and keep away from filth, [5] and do no favour (to anyone merely) to ask more (in exchange), [6] and for the sake of your Lord, observe patience. [7] For when the trumpet is blown, [8] that day will be a difficult day, [9] not easy for the disbelievers. [10] Leave me (to deal) with the one whom I have created lonely, [11] and I gave him extensive wealth, [12] and sons present before (his) eyes, [13] and extended (power and honour) to him fairly well. [14] Still, he aspires that I should give him more. [15] Never! He is inimical towards Our verses. [16] I will force him to climb (the mountain) sa'ud. [17] He pondered and suggested. [18] Death onto him! How (bad) is the suggestion he has put forward! [19] Again, death unto him! How (bad) is the suggestion he has put forward! [20] Then he looked (to those around him,) [21] then he frowned and scowled, [22] then turned his back, and waxed proud, [23] then said, "This is nothing but traditional magic; [24] this is

nothing but saying of a mortal." [25] **I will put him into Saqar (Hell).** [26] **And what can let you know what Saqar is?** [27] **It neither spares (anything inside it from burning) nor leaves (any disbeliever outside).** [28] **It will disfigure the skins.** [29] **Appointed on it are nineteen (wardens).** [30] **And We did not make wardens of the Fire but (from among) angels, and did not fix their number but as a test for those who disbelieve, so that those who are given the Book may come to believe, and those who believe may increase in belief, and so that those who are given the Book and those who believe may not doubt (its correctness), and so that those having malady in their hearts and the disbelievers say, "What has Allah meant by this (sentence that is as strange as a) proverb?" Thus Allah lets go astray whomever He wills, and leads to the right path whomever He wills. And no one knows the hosts of your Lord but He. And this is nothing else but a reminder for mankind.** [31] **Truly, I swear by the moon,** [32] **and by the night when it goes back,** [33] **and by the morning when it becomes bright,** [34] **it (*saqar*: Hell) is one of the greatest things** [35] **as a warning to the mankind,** [36] **to the one who wishes to come forward (towards good deeds) or to go back (from them).** [37] **Everyone will be detained (in the Hell) because of what he did,** [38] **except the People of the Right, (i.e. those who will be given their Book of Deeds in their right hands)** [39] **who will be in gardens, asking** [40] **about the guilty persons,** [41] **"What has brought you to? (*Saqar*: Hell)"** [42] **They will say, "We were not among those who offered *ṣalāh*, (obligatory prayer)** [43] **and we used not to give food to the needy,** [44] **and we used to indulge (in mocking at the truth) along with those who indulged,** [45] **and used to deny the Day of Requital,** [46] **until when we were overtaken by that which is certain."** [47] **Then intercession of intercessors will not avail them.** [48] **So what has happened to them that they are turning away from the Reminder,** [49] **as if they were wild donkeys,** [50] **fleeing from a lion?** [51] **Rather, every one of them wishes that he should be given unrolled (divine) scriptures.** [52] **Never! But they do not fear the Hereafter.** [53] **Never! Indeed, this is a Reminder.** [54] **So, whoever so wishes may take advice from it.** [55] **And they will not take advice unless Allah so wills. He is worthy to be feared, and worthy to forgive.** [56]

Commentary

Sūrah Al-Muddththir is one of the Sūrahs that was sent down in very early days of the revelation. Therefore, some of the scholars considered this Sūrah to be the first one in order of revelation. However, according to the well-known authentic *aḥādīth*, the first instalment of revelation

comprised the initial verses of Sūrah Iqra'. Traditions show that after a few verses of this Sūrah had been revealed, further revelation stopped for a period of time. The period of time during which there was a temporary cessation of revelation is termed as *fatrat-ul-waḥy*. Towards the end of this period, an incident took place that is recounted by the Holy Prophet ﷺ thus:

While I was walking, I heard a voice from the sky. So I lifted my gaze towards the sky and saw the same angel who had come to me in the cave of Hira'. He was sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth. So I was struck with awe until I fell down to the ground. Then, I went to my family and I said, زمّلونی زمّلونی "Wrap me up, wrap me up" So, they wrapped me up! Allah revealed the initial verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. (Ṣaḥīḥain).

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed in this Sūrah as : -

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ (O you, enveloped in a mantle...74:1) The word *al-Muddaththir* is derived from *dithār* which refers to a 'thick, warm over-garment [such as a cloak or mantle] which a person wears in winter over his other clothes in order to protect himself from cold.' The form of address is affectionate and endearing as was explained under *Al-Muzzammil* in the preceding Sūrah. The two forms of address, *al-Muzzammil* and *al-Muddaththir,* are near-synonyms. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī cites a report from Jābir Ibn Zaid who says that *Al-Muddaththir* was revealed after *Al-Muzzammil.* Some scholars attribute this narration to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه as well. However, according to the narration previously reported from Ṣaḥīḥain, it is clear that the first Sūrah to be revealed [after the temporary cessation] was *Al-Muddaththir.* If *Al-Muzzammil* was revealed before this, Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh رضي الله عنه [the narrator of the Ḥadīth] would have narrated it. Clearly, Al-Muzzammil and Al-Muddaththir, are near-synonyms. Therefore, it is very likely that the two Sūrahs might have been revealed in connection with the same incident - when the Holy Prophet ﷺ, whilst walking, heard a voice from the sky and saw Jibra'īl Amīn عليه السلام sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth, and then went to the house and wrapped himself in a mantle. This at least confirms the point that the initial verses of the two Sūrahs were among the first verses to be revealed after the temporary break in the revelation. It is however not clear as to which set

of the verses was revealed first, and which was revealed subsequently. Authentic narratives confirm that the initial verses of Sūrah Iqra' were first to be revealed. *Al-Muzzammil* and *Al-Muddaththir* were though revealed approximately the same time in connection with the same incident, there is a difference between the two: The injunctions given at the beginning of *Al-Muzzammil* are related to the Holy Prophet's ﷺ personal purification and perfection, and in *Al-Muddaththir* the injunctions are related to preaching, propagation and human reform.

Sūrah Al-Muddaththir lays down the following six injunctions:

Injunction [1]

قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ (stand up and warn...74:2) 'Stand up' could be taken in its primary sense. It will mean: 'Remove the additional clothes in which you have wrapped yourself'. It is also not unlikely that 'stand up' means 'Prepare yourself for the onerous task of reforming the creation of Allah'. The command *fa-andhir* (and warn) comes from the infinitive *indhār* (warning) which is based on love and affection', such as a father's warning his children against the dangers of a snake, scorpion or fire. The Prophets proclaim the Divine Message and warn its rejecters of the evil consequences of rejection. Therefore, they have received the titles of *nadhīr* and *bashīr*. '*Nadhīr*' means 'the one who affectionately and endearingly warns [people] against harmful things' and '*Bashīr*' refers to 'the one who gives glad tidings'. The Qur'ān has conferred both the titles on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Holy Book is replete with them. Here, however, the Qur'ān takes it as sufficient to mention *indhār* 'to warn' because at the time of revelation of this verse there were only a handful of Muslims. The rest of the people were all rejecters and disbelievers. They needed to be warned and did not merit glad tidings.

Injunction [2]

وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ (..and pronounce the greatness of your Lord...74:3) It means: "Proclaim the greatness of your Lord both orally and practically. The attribute *rabb* (Lord) has been used in this context because it is itself the effective cause of the injunction, in that He is the Sustainer, Cherisher and Nourisher of the entire world. He alone is worthy of *Kibriyā'*. The word *takbīr* literally signifies 'to say *Allāhu Akbar* '. This includes *takbīr* of *taḥrīmah* in the beginning of prayers and other *takbīrs* also. *Takbīr* is recited outside the prayers as well, such as in *adhān* and *iqāmah*. There

is no indication in the Qur'ān that this injunction specifically refers to uttering *Allāhu Akbar* to commence the prayers.

Injunction [3]

وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ (and purify your clothes...74:4) The word *thiyāb* is the plural of *thaub*. In its primary sense, it refers to 'clothes or garment'. Metaphorically, the words *thaub* and *libās* at times refer to 'action, heart, soul, moral character and religion.' Man's body may also be referred to as '*libās*'. The Holy Qur'ān and Arabic idioms bear ample testimony to this. Scholars of tafsir have taken all these senses into account when interpreting this verse. The variant interpretations may not be suspected of contradiction or conflict. The different interpretations attached to the verse enrich its significance. Thus the verse would signify that the body and clothes must be kept clean from all kinds of physical impurity. The heart and soul must be kept clean from false beliefs and adulterating thoughts, and free from base morals or from moral decadence. From this it is deducible that it is forbidden to trail the pants or loin-cloth below the ankle, because this is likely to pollute the garment. The injunction of cleansing the garment may signify that the garment must not be made or bought of unlawful money. It must not be made in such a way as the sacred law does not permit. Apparently, the injunction of cleansing the clothes is not specific to prayers. The injunction applies under all conditions. Thus the jurists have ruled that it is not permitted to keep the body and clothes unclean, without necessity, even outside prayers. Likewise, it is not permitted to sit in an unclean place. In times of necessity, it would be an exception. [Maẓharī]. The Holy Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

'...Surely Allah loves those who are most repenting, and loves those who keep themselves pure.[2:222] '

And according to a *ḥadīth* narrative 'Cleanliness is half the faith'. Therefore, a Muslim, under all conditions and circumstances, needs to keep his body, clothes and house clean and pure and also maintain his inner cleanliness of the heart. And Allah knows best!

Injunction [4]

وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ (...and keep away from filth...74:5). The letters 'RJZ' may be read as *rujz* or *rijz*, and in either case the word has the same significance.

Mujāhid, 'Ikramah, Qatādah, Zuhrī, Ibn Zaid and other leading authorities of Tafsīr interpret the word *rujz* as 'idols' in this context. According to a narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, it signifies 'any sin'. The verse enjoins to give up idols or sins. Although the Holy Prophet ﷺ never indulged in idolatry at any time in his life, he is commanded, for emphasis, to abstain from it in future as he kept away from it in the past. This command is in actual fact directed to the idolaters, so that they may realise the importance of abstaining from idol-worship, as it enjoins the Holy Prophet ﷺ to shun all filth [idols and sins] despite being sinless and infallible.

Injunction [5]

وَلَا تَمْنُن تَسْتَكْثِرُ (...and do no favour [to anyone merely] to ask more [in exchange]....74:6). In other words, no gift should be given to anyone seeking to get back in return more than what was given. This indicates that it is reprehensible to give to someone a gift with the intention that the person will give him a higher gift. Although it seems to be allowed, by another verse of the Qur'ān, for common people, yet it is reprehensible and morally unrighteous - especially for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it is unlawful, as explained by Ibn 'Abbās ؓ.

Injunction [6]

وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ (and for the sake of your Lord, observe patience.....74:7) The word *ṣabr* literally signifies 'to restrain oneself'. In the Qur'ānic context, the word has a very wide scope. It signifies to bind oneself to the laws of Allah, to restrain oneself from things made unlawful by Allah, and to control oneself, as far as possible, from unnecessary bewailing and complaining in times of difficulties and hardships. Thus this injunction is rather comprehensive which embraces almost the entire religion. On this occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is directed to observe patience, particularly because the earlier verses have directed him to invite the people towards the true faith and to avoid the infidelity and *shirk*. It is obvious that he will be opposed and persecuted by the forces of evil, as the result of his missionary efforts. He should, therefore, be ready to bear all opposition and persecution with patience and fortitude .

Having given these few injunctions to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the verses further refer to the Hereafter and its horrors. The word *nāqūr* means 'trumpet' and the verb *nuqira* means 'to blow into the trumpet so that it

makes a loud high sound'. After stating that the Day of Doom will be very horrible for all the infidels, a particular arrogant and conceited disbeliever has been described. He was a great mischief-maker and the gravity of his punishment will befit the enormity and gravity of his sins.

The Annual Income of Walīd Ibn Mughīrah: Ten Million Guineas

The disbeliever referred to here is Walīd Ibn Mughīrah. Allah had favoured him with abundant wealth, property and children. According to Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, his land, property and gardens stretched from Makkah to Ṭā'if. According to Thaurī, his annual income was ten million Dinars. Some scholars have estimated less than this amount. It is, nonetheless, agreed that the income and yearly produce of his fields and gardens were available in every season, winter or summer. Thus the Qur'ān says:

وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَّمْدُوْدًا. وَّبَنِيْنَ شُهُوْدًا (and I gave him extensive wealth, [12] and sons present before (his) eyes...74:12-13) He was recognised as the Arab leader. He was known among his fellow citizens by the title of *raiḥānah* (the Fragrance) of the *Quraish*. He himself used to boastfully refer to himself as Waḥīd Ibn-ul-Waḥīd 'Unique, the son of the Unique', meaning 'Neither I have any match in my nation, nor my father Mughīrah.'. [Qurṭubī]. But he was ungrateful to Allah for His favours. Despite accepting Qur'ān as the Word of Allah, he imputed a lie to the Qur'ān, calling it sorcery and calling the Holy Prophet ﷺ a sorcerer. Tafsīr of Qurṭubī recounts the story thus: When the following passage of the Qur'ān was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was reciting it:

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيْدِ
الْعِقَابِ ذِى الطَّوْلِ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ اِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٣﴾

Ḥā Mīm. [1] This is revelation of the Book from Allah, the Mighty, the All-Knowing, [2] the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, the One who is severe in punishment, the One who is the source of all power. There is no god but He. To Him is the ultimate return (of all) [3]. [40:1-3].

Walīd Ibn Mughīrah, hearing the recitation, exclaimed spontaneously, in which he was forced to concede as follows:

واللّٰه لقد سمعت منه كلامًا ماهو من كلام الانس ولا من كلام الجّن وان له
لحلاوة و ان عليه لطلاوة وان اعلاه لمُثمر وانّ اسفله لمغدق وانّه ليعلو ولا يُعلىٰ

عليه وما يقول هذا بشر.

> 'By Allah! I have heard such a speech from him [Muḥammad] as can neither be the speech of a mortal, nor of Jinn. It has sweetness and elegance. Its upper part is fruit-bearing, and its lower part causes water to flow. Its beauty, no doubt, surpasses the beauty of all speeches, and cannot be superseded. It is not the speech of any human being. '

When the Quraish heard about what the great wealthy Arab leader had to say, it created a great convulsion in the Quraish, because it resulted in a wide inclination of the people towards Islam. This was a cause for concern for the leaders of the Quraish. They gathered and discussed (that if Walīd were to embrace the Islamic faith, the rest of the Quraish would soon follow suit.) Abū Jahl put their mind at ease when he took upon himself the responsibility of speaking to him and solving the problem.

Dialogue between Abū Jahl And Walīd: They Concur on the Holy Prophet's Veracity

Abū Jahl went to Walīd and sat next to him, pretending to be very sad. Walīd enquired, 'What is the matter? Why do you look so sad?' Abū Jahl made the reply, 'The Quraish decided to collect money for you and help you in your old age. Now they have learnt that you visit Muḥammad ﷺ and son of Abū Quḥāfah [ie Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ] so that you may have some eatables from them, and to this end you flatter them. You praise their speech. (Obviously, it was a lie that the Quraish was collecting money to help Walīd. The lie was invented merely to make him angry. Similarly it was also a lie that he was getting food from the Holy Prophet ﷺ.)' Walīd was highly enraged on hearing this. His anger knew no bounds and said in arrogance and conceit, 'How can the Quraish think this? I swear by Lāt and 'Uzzā [the two Arabian idols], I am not in need of their food. Do they not know that I am superior to them in abundance of wealth? However, when you say that Muḥammad ﷺ is insane, nobody would believe it. Did you ever see him perform any any act of insanity?' Abū Jahl replied لَا وَاللّٰهِ 'Never, by God!' He said, 'You claim that Muḥammad ﷺ is a soothsayer. Did you hear him speak like a soothsayer?' Abū Jahl's reply was again in the negative. Then Walīd said, 'You say that he is a poet. Did you hear him recite poetry?' When Abū Jahl declared that he had not, Walīd added, 'You say that he is a

liar. Did you ever heard him telling a lie? Abū Jahl was forced to concede that they had never heard him tell a lie. (In fact, they had conferred upon him the titles of *Aṣ-Ṣādiq* 'The Truthful' and *Al-'Amīn* 'The Honest'.). Then Walīd said, 'You say that he is a soothsayer. Have you then seen him uttering such words or doing such acts as the soothsayers are accustomed to? We know well the utterings of the soothsayers. Muḥammad's discourse cannot be held as the utterance of a soothsayer.' Abū Jahl again had to admit. 'No, by God!' Now Abū Jahl had to withdraw from all such false allegations, but he was wondering what he should say to the people about the Holy Prophet ﷺ to stop them from following him. So, he said to Walīd, "Then, you tell me what we should say about him?" Walīd started thinking, then he raised his eyes towards Abū Jahl, frowned in a hateful manner, and ultimately replied, 'I think he is certainly a magician'. He knew well that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not a magician either. But in order to devise an excuse for saying so, he argued, 'Do you not see how his speech separates husband from wife, brother from brother and father from son? This is the magical effect of faith. As soon as a person embraces the faith, he begins to hate his unbelieving mother, father and other relatives.' The verses describe him thus:

إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ. فَقُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ. ثُمَّ قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ. ثُمَّ نَظَرَ. ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ. ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ
وَاسْتَكْبَرَ. فَقَالَ إِنْ هٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْثَرُ. إِنْ هٰذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ.

(He pondered and suggested. [18] Death onto him! How [bad] is the suggestion he has put forward! [19] Again, death unto him! How [bad] is the suggestion he has put forward! [20] Then he looked [to those around him,] [21] then he frowned and scowled, [22] then turned his back, and waxed proud, [23] then said, "This is nothing but traditional magic; [24] this is nothing but saying of a mortal."...25)

The word *qaddara* is derived from *taqdīr*, and literally denotes 'to suggest'. The wretched Walīd was fully convinced of the veracity of the Messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but his anger got the better of him, and being vanquished by his arrogance and conceit, he had decided to oppose him. However, he wanted to abstain from lying openly, so that he might not be exposed to shame and disgrace. Therefore, he pondered very carefully, and suggested that he should be labelled a 'magician' on the grounds that his speech causes separation between father and son,

and between brothers, as it happens in the case of sorcery. He is therefore cursed repeatedly in the verses cited above.

Unbelievers Abstained from Telling Lies

When we analyse, it would appear very clearly that all unbelievers and transgressors were involved in committing all kinds of sins and shameful deeds, but they abstained from the enormity of telling lies. Abū Sufyān's statement in the royal court of Heraculus shows that the pagans were willing to sacrifice their lives and children in opposing the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but they were not willing to tell lies lest they are socially stigmatised as liars. Alas, in this so-called progressive world where everything moves retrogressively 'telling lies' is no sin. It is in fact treated as a great art. Let alone unbelievers, even the pious and religious Muslims do not find it hateful. They pride upon telling lies and getting others to tell lies. We seek Allah's refuge from such an attitude.

Children's Stay with the Father is a Great Boon

While mentioning the favours Allah had bestowed on Walīd, the Holy Qur'ān has said,

بَنِيْنَ شُهُوْدًا

'and sons present before (his) eyes, [13]'

This shows that just as the birth of children and their being alive are a boon of Allah, their staying with parents is also a great divine blessing, because it is the cause of coolness of their eyes and a satisfaction of their heart. Additionally, abiding in their presence, children can be of assistance to the parents in their service and businesses. But the progress which this retrogressive age is making is based on gold and silver currencies. Comfort and peace are founded on promissory notes. Parents throw away their children in foreign countries. They are happy at their children's staying overseas for years, and it does not matter if they do not see their faces all their lives as long as they receive news of their huge earnings and salaries or income, enabling them to express their superiority to their family members. This indicates that they are unaware of the concept of peace and comfort. This should be the result of forgetting Allah as the Qur'ān says:

نَسُوا اللّٰهَ فَاَنْسٰهُمْ اَنْفُسَهُمْ

'...those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own

selves__[59:19]'

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُوْدَ رَبِّكَ اِلَّا هُوَ (...And no one knows the hosts of your Lord but He ... 74:31) Muqātil, among the leading authorities, says that this is rebuttal to Abū Jahl's statement. When he heard this verse which says that there are nineteen angels in charge of Hell, he addressed the youth of Quraish and said that Muḥammad ﷺ has only nineteen companions, so there is nothing to worry about. Baihaqī records a narrative from Suddi that when verse 30 was revealed, a foolish Quraishi unbeliever, Abūl-Asalaīn by name, spoke out: 'O nation of Quraish, I alone am sufficient for the nineteen. I will take care of ten with my right arm, and nine with my left arm. Thus I will put an end to all nineteen of them.' On this occasion, this verse was revealed. 'O fools, first of all one angel is sufficient for all. Moreover, the number nineteen refers to the chiefs of angels. Under each of these angels, the number of Allah's angels is legion beyond human count or computation. Allah alone knows their number. They are ready at hand to carry out the punishment to the unbelievers and transgressors.'

In the next verses, there is the mention of the Hereafter and its horrors.

اِنَّهَا لَاِحْدَى الْكُبَرِ (it (*saqar*: Hell) is one of the greatest things....74:35) The pronoun in the phrase *innahā* refers to *saqar* 'Hell' which has been mentioned in one of the preceding verses. The word *kubar* is the plural of *kubrā* which is an adjective for *dāhiyah* or *muṣībah* 'calamity'. The verse purports to say that Hell which the unbelievers will enter will be one of the greatest calamities. Besides, there will be many different kinds of torments and tortures.

لِمَنْ شَآءَ مِنْكُمْ اَنْ يَّتَقَدَّمَ اَوْيَتَاَخَّرَ (to the one who wishes to come forward [towards good deeds] or to go back [from them]...74:37) In this context, 'to come forward' signifies 'coming forward towards faith and obedience' and *ta'akhkhur* 'to go backward' signifies 'moving away from faith and obedience'. The verse purports to warn against the torment and torture of the Hellfire. This applies to all human beings in general. Some accept the warning and are guided by the truth, and the unfortunate ones hold back from accepting the warning, turn away from it and reject it.

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِيْنَةٌ اِلَّآ اَصْحٰبَ الْيَمِيْنِ (Everyone will be detained [in the

Hell] because of what he did, [38] except the People of the Right, [i.e. those who will be given their Book of Deeds in their right hands].....74:38-39) The word *rahīnah* is used in the sense of *marhūnah* 'will be detained'. The word is derived from *rahn* 'to give something valuable to a pawnbroker as a security for a debt. The valuable thing is thus merely detained by the pawnbroker. He cannot use it or take advantage of it'. Likewise, every person on the Day of Judgement will be detained in lieu of his sins, except those who will be given their Book of Deeds in their right hands. In this context, 'detention' could refer to being detained in Hell. In this case, the statement would mean that every person will be held in pledge in Hell against his sins to receive punishment, except the People of the Right. The context indicates that the People of the Right are those who have repaid their debt, i.e. they have fulfilled their obligations in this world towards Allah and other human beings. In these instances there is no need for them to be detained. This interpretation seems to be plain, simple and straightforward. However, if 'detention' refers to being held at some other place before giving account or before admission into Paradise or Hell, it signifies that every person will be held to give an account of his deeds. No person will be permitted to move out unless the account is taken. In this case, the exception of the People of the Right could refer to the sinless who are not accountable, such as minors or immature children as explained by Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ. According to a Tradition, a segment of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ community would be exempted from accountability. They will enter Paradise without having to account for actions. Possibly, it could be referring to this segment. According to Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah, there will be three categories of people on the Plain of Gathering: [1] *sābiqūn* 'the Foremost' and *muqarrabūn* 'who have attained nearness to Allah'; [2] the People of the Right; and [3] the People of the Left. On this occasion, the *muqarrabūn* have been merged with 'the People of the Right', and only the latter people have been mentioned. From this point of view, there is no express text which states that all the People of the Right will be excepted, and will not be detained for accountability. The first interpretation, that is being held in Hell, appropriately fits the context. And Allah knows best!

فَمَا تَنفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّٰفِعِينَ (Then intercession of intercessors will not avail

them...74:48) The attached pronoun of *tanfa'uhum* refers to those sinners who have been mentioned in the preceding verses. They confessed to four crimes: [1] they did not perform obligatory prayers; [2] they did not feed the poor, that is, they did not spend on the necessities of the poor; [3] they indulged (in mocking at the truth) along with those who indulged in opposing Islam or committing sins and shameful deeds; and [4] they denied the Day of Requital.

This verse purports to say that whoever has these characteristics, including denial of the Day of Requital, is an infidel. The intercession of anyone who tries to intercede for an infidel will be of no benefit to him on the Day of Judgement. Even if all the intercessors join forces to intercede, it will not help. This is because intercession is only useful if the conditions for it are met. Therefore, the verse uses the plural expression, thus:

شفاعة الشافعين

'intercession of intercessors'

No Intercession will Benefit an Unbeliever, but will Benefit a Believer

It is deducible from the verse under comment that, besides infidels, all Muslims, even though they may be sinners, will benefit from intercession as many authentic *aḥādīth* bear ample testimony to this. The intercessors will be the Prophets of Allah, Allah's friends and righteous personalities. It is confirmed that the general body of believers will intercede for one another, and their intercession will be accepted.

A Special Note

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ narrates that Allah's angels and Prophets, the martyrs and the righteous will intercede for sinners in the Hereafter, and they will be delivered from Hell by virtue of their intercession, except the four types of sinners who have been classified above, that is, those who failed to perform their obligatory prayer and to pay their Zakāh, those who opposed Islam with the opponents of Islam and denied the Hereafter. This shows that intercession will not be accepted for those who fail to perform their obligatory Ṣalāh and pay their Zakāh. However, other narratives indicate that the correct view with regard to the verse under comment is that the unacceptability of

intercession refers to those sinners who commit the four types of crimes that include the rejection of the Hereafter. Besides the rejection, it is not necessary that sinners committing other sins should be punished in the same way. However, there are other *Ḥadīth* narratives that refer to certain major sins which deprive people of intercession. For instance, if a person denies the veracity of intercession, or if he denies the existence of the Pond of Kauthar, he will have no share in either of the two.

فَمَالَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكِرَةِ مُعْرِضِيْنَ (So what has happened to them that they are turning away from the Reminder...74:49)

The word *tadhkirah* (Reminder), in this context, refers to the Holy Qur'ān, because the word literally signifies a 'reminder or something that reminds'. The Qur'ān is unique in reminding Allah's attributes of perfection, His mercy and wrath, and the reward and punishment. Towards the end, the verse 54 has explained that the 'Reminder' is the Holy Qur'ān that is rejected by them. The allergy of the infidels against the Holy Qur'ān has been mentioned in verses 50 and 51 in the following words, كَاَنَّهُمْ حُمُرٌ مُّسْتَنْفِرَةٌ. فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ "as if they were wild donkeys, fleeing from a lion?" The word *qaswarah* used in verse 51 has two meanings: [1] a 'lion'; and [2] an 'archer' or a 'hunter'. Both meanings have been reported from the noble Companions.

هُوَ اَهْلُ التَّقْوٰى وَاَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ (...He is worthy to be feared, and worthy to forgive... 74:56) Allah is *'Ahl-ut-taqwā* in the sense that 'He alone is worthy to be feared and entitled to be obeyed'. *Ahl-ul-Maghfirah* signifies that 'He alone is the Being Who forgives the sins of even the greatest sinners whenever He so wishes': No one else has the power to do this .

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Muddaththir
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah
(The Resurrection)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 40 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 40

لَآ أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ ﴿١﴾ وَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ﴿٢﴾ أَيَحْسَبُ
الْإِنْسَانُ أَلَّنْ نَّجْمَعَ عِظَامَهٗ ﴿٣﴾ بَلٰى قٰدِرِيْنَ عَلٰٓى أَنْ نُّسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهٗ
﴿٤﴾ بَلْ يُرِيْدُ الْإِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهٗ ﴿٥﴾ يَسْئَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيٰمَةِ
﴿٦﴾ فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ ﴿٧﴾ وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ ﴿٨﴾ وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ
وَالْقَمَرُ ﴿٩﴾ يَقُوْلُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفَرُّ ﴿١٠﴾ كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ
﴿١١﴾ إِلٰى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذِنِ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ ﴿١٢﴾ يُنَبَّؤُا الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا
قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ ﴿١٣﴾ بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلٰى نَفْسِهٖ بَصِيْرَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾ وَّلَوْ أَلْقٰى
مَعَاذِيْرَهٗ ﴿١٥﴾ لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهٖ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهٖ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهٗ
وَقُرْاٰنَهٗ ﴿١٧﴾ فَإِذَا قَرَأْنٰهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْاٰنَهٗ ﴿١٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهٗ ﴿١٩﴾ كَلَّا
بَلْ تُحِبُّوْنَ الْعَاجِلَةَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَتَذَرُوْنَ الْاٰخِرَةَ ﴿٢١﴾ وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ
نَّاضِرَةٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِلٰى رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَوُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ تَظُنُّ
أَنْ يُّفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ كَلَّآ إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَقِيْلَ مَنْ سكتة
رَاقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَّظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَالْتَفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ ﴿٢٩﴾

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَلَا صَدَّقَ وَلَا صَلَّىٰ ﴿٣١﴾ وَلَٰكِن
كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ﴿٣٢﴾ ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَتَمَطَّىٰ ﴿٣٣﴾ أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ
فَأَوْلَىٰ ﴿٣٤﴾ ثُمَّ أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ ﴿٣٥﴾ أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنسَانُ أَن يُتْرَكَ
سُدًى ﴿٣٦﴾ أَلَمْ يَكُ نُطْفَةً مِّن مَّنِيٍّ يُمْنَىٰ ﴿٣٧﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً
فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾
أَلَيْسَ ذَٰلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَن يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾

I swear by the Day of Resurrection, [1] **and I swear by the self-reproaching conscience, (that Resurrection is a reality.)** [2] **Does man think that We will never reassemble his bones?** [3] **Yes, We are able to reset (even) his fingertips perfectly.** [4] **But man wishes to go on violating Allah's injunctions (even in future) ahead of him.** [5] **He asks, "When will be this Day of Resurrection?"** [6] **So, when the eyes will be dazzled,** [7] **and the moon will lose its light,** [8] **and the sun and the moon will be joined together,** [9] **on that day man will say, "Where to escape?"** [10] **Never! There will be no refuge at all.** [11] **On that day, towards your Lord will be the destination (of everyone.)** [12] **Man will be informed of what he sent ahead and what he left behind.** [13] **Rather, man will be a witness against himself,** [14] **even though he may offer his excuses.** [15]

(O Prophet,) do not move your tongue (during revelation) for (reciting) it (the Qur'ān) so as you receive it in hurry. [16] **It is surely undertaken by Us to store it (in your heart), and to let it be recited (by you after revelation is completed).** [17] **Therefore, when it is recited by Us (through the angel), follow its recitation (by concentration of your heart).** [18] **Then, it is undertaken by Us to explain it.** [19]

Never! (think that your denial of Resurrection is correct) But you like that which is immediate, [20] **and neglect the Hereafter.** [21] **Many faces, that day, will be glowing,** [22] **looking towards their Lord,** [23] **and many faces, that day, will be gloomy,** [24] **realizing that a back-breaking calamity is going to be inflicted on them.** [25] **Never! (think that you will remain in this world forever) When the soul (of a patient) reaches the**

clavicles, [26] **and it is said, "Who is an enchanter (that can save him?)"** [27] **and he realizes that it is (the time of) departure (from the world,)** [28] **and one shank is intertwined with the other shank,** [29] **then on that day, it is to your Lord that one has to be driven.** [30]

So (the denier of the Hereafter) neither believed, nor prayed, [31] **but rejected the truth and turned away (from it),** [32] **then he went to his home puffed up with pride.** [33] **(It will be said to such a man,) Woe to you, then woe to you!** [34] **Again, woe to you, then woe to you!** [35] **Does man presume that he will be left unchecked?** [36] **Was he not an ejaculated drop of semen?** [37] **Then he became a blood-clot, then He created (him) and made (him) perfect,** [38] **and made from him two kinds, male and female.** [39] **Has He no power to give life to the dead?** [40]

Commentary

لَآ أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ. وَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ (I swear by the Day of Resurrection, [1] and I swear by the self-reproaching conscience, (that Resurrection is a reality.)...75:1-2). The negative particle *lā* 'nay' prefixed to the oath in this context has no meaning. When the object of oath is to refute the false thought of an opponent, this redundant negative particle is used before oath. This usage is commonplace in Arabic idiom. Such usage is sometimes employed in our language [in Urdu] as well [as an answer to some objection or in repudiation of what is said before or] to emphasize an important subject. This Sūrah refutes and rebuts doubts about the possibility of the Resurrection by the rejecters. The Sūrah first swears an oath by the Resurrection, and then by the self-reproaching conscience. The complement or subject of oath is contextually understood - the Day of Resurrection is a reality and it shall come to pass. The object of oath in verse [1] is to affirm and emphasize the importance of the subject about which an oath is taken. In this instance, it is the Resurrection. In verse [2], the object of oath is to lay emphasis on the importance of self-reproaching conscience and its acceptability in the sight of Allah. The word *nafs* means 'soul' or 'life' and the word *lawwāmah* is derived from *lawm* signifying 'reproach or upbraid'. The phrase refers to the human conscience that upbraids him for doing bad deeds. It upbraids him not only for doing bad deeds, but also for doing good deeds - 'why did you not do more good, and attain higher stages [of development]?' In short, a

perfect believer reproaches and upbraids himself all the time whether doing good or bad. His reproaching himself for bad deeds is quite understandable, but why should he reproach, blame or criticize himself for good deeds? He should try to reach for higher goals in life by doing better deeds. He upbraids himself for missing out on that score. This interpretation is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and other leading authorities on Tafsīr [Ibn Kathīr and others].

On the same basis, Sayyidnā Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى interpreted *nafs lawwāmah* as *nafs mu'minah* meaning, the 'believing soul' and said that 'By Allah! A believer at all times upbraids his own self. It is obvious why he should reproach himself when he commits evil. He reproaches himself when he does good deeds as well, because he feels that he has not performed his duties of servitude and Divine worship adequately. He feels that he has not fulfilled and consummated his obligations of slave-hood perfectly. Therefore, he reproaches himself for his shortcomings in the performance of his duties and obligations.'

Interpretation of *Lawwāmah*

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى and others have expressed the view that Allah has sworn an oath by the self-reproaching conscience in order to show honour for the believing souls who take account of their deeds, regret, and feel sorry for, their shortcomings and reproach themselves.

Three kinds of *Nafs*

The foregoing interpretation of *An-nafs-ul-lawwāmah* embraces *An-nafs-ul-muṭma'innah.* The two terms are titles of a God-fearing person.

In Ṣūfī terminology, we come across the following concepts. The noble Ṣūfis say that man in his nature goes through three stages of human development. The first stage is called] *An-nafs-ul-ammārah* 'the self that tempts (to evil)' as said by the Holy Qur'ān:

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوْءِ

'...Surely, man's inner self often incites to evil_[12:53]'

The second stage of development is called *An-nafs-ul-lawwāmah* 'the self that blames' - translated above as 'the self-reproaching conscience'.

The first stage is developed into the second stage when the traveler perform righteousness, and exerts himself in *riyāḍah* 'ascetic discipline' and *mujāhadah* 'spiritual struggle'. This Self is conscious of its own imperfections. It regrets its evils and shortcomings, but it is not completely cut off from the evils. The third and highest stage of development is called *An-nafs-ul-muṭma'innah* 'the self at peace'. This self develops into this stage when it progressively performs righteousness and attains Divine nearness and applies the sacred laws of Sharī'ah so rigorously that Sharī'ah becomes his nature and develops a natural hatred for anything contrary to Sharī'ah . The title of the self at this stage is *muṭma'innah.*

Then an oft-repeated objection of the disbelievers is mentioned, that is, when they are dead and reduced to bones and dust, how will they be raised again to life. The following verse rebuts this objection, thus:

بَلٰى قٰدِرِيْنَ عَلٰٓى اَنْ نُّسَوِّىَ بَنَانَهٗ (Yes! We are able to reset [even] his fingertips perfectly...75:4). Man is amazed and surprised and thinks that Allah is unable to gather his tiny particles that have been scattered and reassemble his decomposed bones and give him a new life. The verse effectively rebuts this objection by saying that this has happened once before. Every man who grows and develops in the world, his body is composed of particles and elements gathered from different parts of the world. Allah has infinite power to do anything. He will gather the disintegrated bones and the scattered particles of man from different parts of the world and give them life again, as he did the first time. It is not impossible for Him to breathe soul into his structure the second time, as it was not impossible the first time. Why should it be surprising?

Divine Wonders in the Resurrection of Bodies

Allah is able not only to raise man's dead body again, but also to reconstruct every part of his body perfectly up to the minute detail of the very delicate fingertips and individual fingerprints. Man will be given the same body as he had in his worldly life without the slightest difference. Since the inception of time until the end of the world, zillions of human beings of different shapes and sizes come and die. Even if anyone remembers them, it is an impossible task to recompose them precisely. But Allah says in the verse under comment that He is quite able to recreate not only the large limbs, members and organs of the dead, but He is also able to put together his fingertips. The word *Banān* 'fingertips' is specially

mentioned here because they are among the smallest parts of the body. If Allah is able to recreate such small parts [with such precision], it would not be impossible for Him to recreate the larger limbs of the body, such as arms or hands or legs or feet.

Another reason why *banān* 'fingertips' finds a special mention is that Allah has characterized every human body with some identification marks through which one person could be distinctly recognized and distinguished from the other. For instance, the human face is no more than a few square centimeters; yet it has such distinctive characteristics that no two faces look exactly alike. Despite man's tongue and throat being alike, the sounds and voices of young and old, and of men and women are easily distinguishable. Even more amazing than this, are the fingertips and fingerprints. No two thumbprints or fingerprints are alike. Fingertips look alike, but the fingerprints are different. There are zillions of human beings, but the patterns of lines on the skins of the fingers is distinctly recognizable. Thumbprints have played a decisive role in court decisions and judgements. Technical analysis reveals that the patterns of lines are not only on the skin of the thumbs, but also on the skins of all the fingers - distinguishable and recognizable.

In sum, man is amazed as to how Allah will reassemble his bones and give him a new life again, but he should think further than this. He will be raised with the same face, shape and size, and with the same distinctive features, so much so that his fingertips and fingerprints will be reshaped as they were in the first instance of his creation. *Fa-tabārak Allahu Aḥsanul khāliqīn* - 'Glorious is Allah, the Best of Creators!'

بَلْ يُرِيْدُ الْاِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ اَمَامَهٗ (But man wishes to go on violating Allah's injunctions [even in future] ahead of him...75:5). The word *amām* signifies 'ahead or future'. The verse purports to say that the unbeliever or the unmindful man does not ponder over the manifestations of Divine Omnipotence, so that he may regret his denial in the past and make amends for the future. In fact, he wishes to persist in his denial, polytheism and sins even in the future.

فَاِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ. وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ. وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ (So, when the eyes will be dazzled, and the moon will lose its light, and the sun and the moon will be joined together,...75:7-9). This describes the scenes of the Resurrection.

The verb *bariqa* means for the eyes 'to be dazzled and unable to see'. On the Day of Resurrection, the eyes of all will be dazzled and will not be able to see consistently. The verb *khasafa* is derived from *khusūf* which means 'to lose light and become dark'. The verse purports to say that the moon will lose its light or will be eclipsed. The statement that 'the sun and the moon will be joined together' signifies that not only the moon will lose its light, but also the sun will be eclipsed. Astronomers have discovered that the sun has the original light, and the light of the moon is borrowed from the sun. Allah says that the sun and the moon on the Day of Resurrection will be fused together, so that they both will lose their lights. Some scholars interpret this statement to mean that on that Day the sun and the moon will rise from the same point, as some narratives report. And Allah know best!

يُنَبَّؤُا الْإِنسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ (Man will be informed of what he sent ahead, and what he left behind....75:13). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd and Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهم are reported to have said that 'what he sent ahead' refers to the good deeds he has sent forth before his death. The words 'what he left behind' refers to the good or bad, useful or harmful custom he invented and left behind which people follow. He will continue to receive its reward or punishment. Qatādah رحمه الله said that 'what he sent ahead' refers to a good deed he did in his lifetime; and 'what he left behind' refers to a good deed he could have done but did not do and wasted his time or opportunity.

بَلِ الْإِنسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ. وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ (Rather, man will be a witness against himself, even though he may offer his excuses....75:14-15). One meaning of the words *baṣīr* and *baṣīrah* is 'to see'. Another meaning of *baṣīrah* is 'evidence', as for instance in:

قَدْ جَاءَكُم بَصَائِرُ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ

'...There have come to you evidences [1] from your Lord__[6:104]'

In this verse the word *baṣā'ir* is the plural of *baṣīrah* and it means 'evidence, proof, argument or insight'. The word *ma'ādhīr* is the plural of *mi'dhār* meaning, 'excuse'. The verse purports to say that for purposes of following the procedures of fairness and justice, man will be shown each

(1). Another meaning of the word is 'insights' according to which we have translated the verse 6:104 in the text. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

of his deeds on the Plain of Reckoning, although in fact this will not be necessary for him, because every man knows what he does in this world, and he will recall his deeds in the Hereafter, even though he will make excuses. Furthermore, he will see all his good and bad actions on the Plain of Reckoning as the Qur'ān says:

وَوَجَدُوْا مَا عَمِلُوْا حَاضِرًا

'...And they will find what they did all there_[18:49]'

If the word *baṣīrah* is taken in the sense of 'evidence, or proof', the verse signifies that man will be a clear proof against himself, in spite of any excuses he might offer. However, man fails to realize that in this situation, the limbs of his own body [his hearing, his sight, his two hands and his two legs] will testify against him. This is the meaning of the words 'وَلَوْ أَلْقٰى مَعَاذِيْرَهٗ' 'even though he may offer his excuses. [75:15]'.

Thus far, there was the description of the conditions and horrors of the Day of Resurrection. The next four verses are a special guidance for the Messenger ﷺ of Allah to be followed by him at the time of revelation. When Jibra'īl Amīn ﷺ descended with a set of verses, the Holy Prophet ﷺ feared that there might be discrepancy in his listening and reciting it accordingly. His other fear was that he might forget some portion of it, or some word might escape his memory. As a result, when Jibra'īl Amīn ﷺ recited a verse, he would exert himself in repeating the words immediately upon hearing them. In this manner, the strain would be multiplied. Allah revealed four verses in which he is advised not to exert himself so strenuously, because the matter has been simplified for him. Allah has taken upon Himself the responsibility of collecting it in his heart, making him recite it and conveying it to the people, thus:

لَاتُحَرِّكْ بِهٖ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهٖ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهٗ وَقُرْاٰنَهٗ ﴿١٧﴾ فَإِذَا قَرَاْنٰهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْاٰنَهٗ ﴿١٨﴾

([O Prophet,] do not move your tongue [during revelation] for [reciting] it [the Qur'ān] so as you receive it in hurry. It is surely undertaken by Us to store it [in your heart], and to let it be recited [by you after revelation is completed]. Therefore, when it is recited by Us [through the angel], follow its recitation [by concentration of your heart]...75:16-18).

The word Qur'ān here means 'recitation'. In other words, when Jibra'īl ﷺ recites the Qur'ān, you should not recite it along with him, but listen to it attentively. When its recitation is completed, follow its recitation. Here the words 'follow its recitation', by general consensus of the scholars, means 'when Jibra'īl ﷺ recites, be silent and listen to it.'

Muqtadīs (those praying behind an Imām) should not recite the Qur'ān in *ṣalāh*

According to an authentic Ḥadīth, Imām (one who leads a congregational prayer) in prayer is supposed to be followed by *muqtadīs* (those who follow Imām). Therefore, they follow him. When the former bows, the latter must bow; and when he prostrates, the latter must all fall in prostration. In line with this principle, a Ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim adds: اذا قرا فانصتوا 'When he [the Imām] recites, be silent and listen.'

This explains the function of an Imām. In matters of bowing and prostrating, the followers should do as he does, that is, they should perform the acts of bowing and prostrating along with him. However, following him in the matter of recitation is different. When the Imām recites, the followers should be silent and listen. This is the argument of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and some other Imāms in holding that the *muqtadīs* should not recite when following an Imām in prayer. And Allah knows best!

In conclusion, the passage says: 'إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ (Then, it is undertaken by Us to explain it...75:19). In other words, it is Allah's concern to explain the true message of the verses. In fact, the meaning of every single word of the Qur'ān will be made plain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He need not be concerned about it. These four verses laid down the injunctions pertaining to Qur'ān and its recitation. Now the Sūrah reverts to its basic theme of Resurrection. It describes the conditions and horrors of the Hereafter. Here a question arises as to the contextual relationship between the four verses and the rest of the Sūrah where they have been studded. Before the four verses, while describing the Resurrection, it was made plain that Allah's knowledge is infinite, so much so that every man will be resurrected in the same state, the same shape and size, in which he was created the first time. His fingertips will be reconstructed with the same precision that they were created the first time; and his fingerprints will be redesigned with the same patterns of lines on their skins as were designed

the before. There will be not a hair's breadth of a difference. This is possible only because Allah is Omniscient; His knowledge is infinite and all-encompassing; and His preserving capacity is incomparable, unparalleled and unique. On the basis of these attributes, the four verses were revealed to console and comfort the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is told: 'You can forget, and it is possible that you could make a mistake in transmission. But Allah is beyond these things. Allah has taken upon Himself the responsibility of storing the words of the Qur'ān in your heart or explaining the message to you. Do not worry about all this. It is Our concern.' After these four verses, the Sūrah resumes the description of the conditions of Resurrection.

وُجُوهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ (Many faces, that day, will be glowing, looking towards their Lord,...75:23). The word *nāḍirah* means 'fresh'. In other words, many faces that day will be happy, fresh and radiant. The words 'looking towards their Lord' mean 'gazing at their Lord'. This proves that the inmates of Paradise will see Allah in the Hereafter with physical eyes. The scholars of *Ahlus-sunnah* (those following the classic way of interpreting the religion) are unanimous on this issue. The *Mu'tazilites* and the *Kharijites* deny the possibility of seeing Allah, even in Paradise. Their reasoning is philosophical scepticism. They say that there are certain conditions of distance that must be met between the one who sees with his physical eyes and the object that is seen. But these conditions cannot be met between the Creator and the created. The *Ahlus-sunnah* respond that in the Hereafter the Beatific Vision of Allah will be beyond the need of these conditions. He will be seen [unlike any material being] beyond space, direction, shape or form. Ḥadīth narratives make the subject even clearer. The inmates of Paradise will occupy different positions. Consequently, some will see Allah on a weekly basis, on Fridays. Others will see Him daily, morning and evening. Yet others will see Him all the time under all conditions. [Maẓharī].

كَلَّآ إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَقِيلَ مَنْ ۜ رَاقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَّظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ﴿٢٨﴾
وَالْتَفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذِنِ الْمَسَاقُ ﴿٣٠﴾

(When the soul [of a patient] reaches the clavicles, and it is said, "Who is an enchanter [that can save him?]", and he realizes that it is [the time of] departure [from the world,] and one shank is intertwined with the other shank, then on that day, it

is to your Lord that one has to be driven....75:26-30]

In the preceding verses, reckoning on the Day of Reckoning and conditions of the inmates of Paradise and Hell were described. In these verses, man's attention is drawn to his approaching death, which he should not neglect. He should embrace the faith and do deeds of righteousness before death overtakes him, so that he may attain salvation in the Hereafter. The above verse depicts the scene of death. The unmindful man forgets his death until his soul comes up to his collar-bone [throat]. The healers fail to heal him, and the people look for enchanters to save him. When one shank is entwined with the other, he realizes that it is the final moments of his parting. At this juncture neither is his repentance acceptable nor a righteous deed. Therefore, it is necessary for a wise person to make amends before this moment arrives. In the statement, وَالْتَفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ (and one shank is intertwined with the other shank) the word *sāq* means 'shank'. This statement could mean that, being agitated and restless, he strikes one shank on the other, or rubs one shank against the other. It could also signify that if one leg is placed on the other, and the dying person wants to move it, he would not be able to do so. [Sha'bī and Ḥasan have interpreted it in this way].

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that the two 'shanks' refer to the two worlds: the Here and the Hereafter. The verse signifies 'the last day of the days of this world and the first day of the days of the Hereafter; one affliction will be joined to another, and the agony of leaving this world will be joined to the agony of the punishment awaiting the disbeliever in the next world'. And Allah knows best!

اَوْلٰى لَكَ فَاَوْلٰى ﴿٣٤﴾ ثُمَّ اَوْلٰى لَكَ فَاَوْلٰى ﴿٣٥﴾

'[It will be said to such a man,] Woe to you, then woe to you! Again, woe to you, then woe to you!...(75:34-35)

The word *aula* is the inverted form of wail which means 'destruction'. The expression 'woe' has been mentioned four times for the person who has made it his habit to deny and reject, and was steeped in wealth, and died in that state. Therefore, destruction has been heaped on him four times: [1] at the time of death; [2] in the grave; [3] at the time of Resurrection; and finally [4] at the time of entering Hell.

اَلَيْسَ ذٰلِكَ بِقٰدِرٍ عَلٰى اَنْ يُّحْيِيَ الْمَوْتٰى (Has He no power to give life to the

dead?...(75:40). Can it be imagined that the Supreme Being in whose controlling power is death and life and the entire world is not able to bring the dead to life? The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: 'When anyone recites this verse of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah, he should say: بلیٰ بَلیٰ وانا علیٰ ذلک من الشّٰهدین "Yes indeed I am among those who bear witness that He has the power to do it"'. The same Hadith narrative states that when a person recites Sūrah Tin and reaches the verse اَلَيۡسَ اللّٰهُ بِاَحۡكَمِ الۡحٰكِمِيۡنَ 'Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [95:8]', he should utter the same words. The same Ḥadīth states that when a person recites Sūrah Al-Mursalāt and reaches the verse فَبِاَىِّ حَدِيۡثٍۢ بَعۡدَهٗ يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ 'Now, in which discourse, after this, will they believe? [77:50]', he should say اٰمنّا باللّٰه 'I believe in Allah'

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah
Ends here

Sūrah Ad-Dahr

(The Time)

This sūrah is Makki, and it has 31 verses, and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 31

هَلْ اَتٰى عَلَى الْاِنْسَانِ حِيْنٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَّذْكُوْرًا ﴿۱﴾
اِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ اَمْشَاجٍ ۖ نَّبْتَلِيْهِ فَجَعَلْنٰهُ سَمِيْعًا ۢ بَصِيْرًا
﴿۲﴾ اِنَّا هَدَيْنٰهُ السَّبِيْلَ اِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَّاِمَّا كَفُوْرًا ﴿۳﴾ اِنَّآ اَعْتَدْنَا
لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ سَلٰسِلَا۠ وَاَغْلٰلًا وَّسَعِيْرًا ﴿۴﴾ اِنَّ الْاَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُوْنَ مِنْ
كَاْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُوْرًا ﴿۵﴾ عَيْنًا يَّشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللّٰهِ
يُفَجِّرُوْنَهَا تَفْجِيْرًا ﴿۶﴾ يُوْفُوْنَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُوْنَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهٗ
مُسْتَطِيْرًا ﴿۷﴾ وَيُطْعِمُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّيَتِيْمًا وَّاَسِيْرًا
﴿۸﴾ اِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللّٰهِ لَا نُرِيْدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَآءً وَّلَا شُكُوْرًا ﴿۹﴾
اِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَّبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوْسًا قَمْطَرِيْرًا ﴿۱۰﴾ فَوَقٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ شَرَّ
ذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقّٰىهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَّسُرُوْرًا ﴿۱۱﴾ وَجَزٰىهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوْا جَنَّةً
وَّحَرِيْرًا ﴿۱۲﴾ مُّتَّكِـِٕيْنَ فِيْهَا عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ ۚ لَا يَرَوْنَ فِيْهَا شَمْسًا
وَّلَا زَمْهَرِيْرًا ﴿۱۳﴾ وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلٰلُهَا وَذُلِّلَتْ قُطُوْفُهَا تَذْلِيْلًا

﴿١٤﴾ وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِم بِاٰنِيَةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَّاَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيرَا ﴿١٥﴾
قَوَارِيرَا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَّرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَاْسًا كَانَ
مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا ﴿١٧﴾ عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمّٰى سَلْسَبِيلًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَطُوفُ
عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ اِذَا رَاَيْتَهُمْ حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَّنْثُورًا ﴿١٩﴾
وَاِذَا رَاَيْتَ ثَمَّ رَاَيْتَ نَعِيمًا وَّمُلْكًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ عٰلِيَهُمْ ثِيَابُ سُنْدُسٍ
خُضْرٌ وَّاِسْتَبْرَقٌ وَّحُلُّوا اَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَسَقٰهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا
طَهُورًا ﴿٢١﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَآءً وَّكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَّشْكُورًا
﴿٢٢﴾ اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَنْزِيلًا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ
وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ اٰثِمًا اَوْ كَفُورًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيلًا
﴿٢٥﴾ وَّمِنَ فَاسْجُدْ لَهٗ وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ يُحِبُّونَ
الْعَاجِلَةَ وَيَذَرُونَ وَرَآءَهُمْ يَوْمًا ثَقِيلًا ﴿٢٧﴾ نَحْنُ خَلَقْنٰهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا
اَسْرَهُمْ وَاِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَآ اَمْثَالَهُمْ تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنَّ هٰذِهٖ تَذْكِرَةٌ
فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَا تَشَآءُونَ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٣٠﴾ يُّدْخِلُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهٖ
وَالظّٰلِمِينَ اَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

There has come upon man a period of time in which he was nothing worth mentioning. [1] **We have created man from a mixed sperm-drop to put him to a test, so We made him able to hear, able to see.** [2] **We have shown him the way to (let him) become either grateful or ungrateful.** [3] **We have prepared for the disbelievers shackles and iron-collars and a blazing Fire.** [4] **Indeed, the righteous will have a drink from a goblet, blended with (a drink from) Camphor** [5] **that will be a spring from which Allah's slaves will drink, making it flow (wherever they wish) profusely.** [6] **They (are the ones who) fulfil the vows, and fear a day whose evil (events) will be widespread,** [7] **and they give food, despite their**

love for it, to the needy, and the orphan, and the captive, [8] (saying to them,) "We feed you only for the sake of Allah; we have no intention of (receiving) either a return from you or thanks. [9] In fact, we are fearful of a day, from our Lord, that will be frowning, extremely frowning." [10] So Allah will save them from the evil of that day, and will grant them bloom and delight, [11] and will give them, in return for their patience, garden and (garments of) silk, [12] wherein they will be reclining on couches, feeling neither heat of the sun, nor intense cold, [13] and shades of gardens will be hanging low on them, and its fruits will be put entirely into their service. [14] And circulated among them will be vessels of silver, and cups that will be (as transparent as) crystals, [15] _crystals (as shining as if made) of silver, measured by those (who filled them) with due measure. [16] And they will be served with a goblet of drink blended with ginger, [17] a spring therein called Salsabil. [18] And circling around them will be serving boys, blessed with eternal youth; when you would see them, you would take them as scattered pearls. [19] And when you will look around there, you will see the Bliss, and a magnificent realm. [20] Upon them will be garments of green *sundus* (a kind of fine silk), and of *istabraq* (a kind of thick silk). And they will be adorned by bracelets of silver, and their Lord will give them a pure beverage to drink. [21] (It will be said to them,) "This is a reward for you, and your effort has been appreciated." [22]

Indeed we have revealed to you the Qur'ān through a gradual process. [23] So, submit patiently to your Lord's decision, and do not obey any one of them who is sinner or ungrateful. [24] And pronounce the name of Allah morning and evening. [25] And in some parts of night, prostrate before Him, and pronounce His purity for long times at night. [26] In fact these people love that which is immediate, and neglect a Heavy Day ahead of them. [27] We have created them, and have made their joints strong. And whenever We will, We would replace them with others like them, a total replacement. [28] Indeed, this is a reminder; so let anyone who so wishes, adopt a way to his Lord. [29] And you will not so wish, unless Allah so wills. Indeed Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [30] He admits whomsoever He wills to His

mercy. As for the wrongdoers, for them He has prepared a painful punishment. [31]

Commentary

Sūrah Ad-Dahr has also been called Sūrah Al-Insān (Man) and Sūrah Al-Abrār (The Righteous) [Rūḥ]. The Sūrah describes in a very effective, eloquent and elegant style the inception and end of human creation, reward and punishment of deeds, and the conditions of the Hereafter, Paradise and Hell.

هَلْ أَتَىٰ عَلَى الْإِنسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا (There has come upon man a period of time in which he was nothing worth mentioning.....76:1). The interrogative particle *hal* is used [linguistically] to introduce an interrogative sentence. Often, however, an interrogative construction is used to emphasise a self-evident truth. Such an interrogative means that whenever this question is put to anyone at anytime, the same answer is likely to come forth. There can be no other possibility. For instance, if a question is posed to anyone in the middle of day 'Is it not a day?', it is an interrogative sentence, but the answer is predictable and will emphasise its obviousness. Therefore, some scholars say that the particle *hal* is used here in the sense of *qad* 'indeed'. In both cases, the verse signifies that there has come upon man a period of time in which he was nothing worth mentioning. The word *ḥīnun* with nunation [which is the sign of 'indefiniteness'] signifies 'a long indefinite period of time; The verse mentions that a long period of time came upon man. This indicates that man essentially did exist at that time in one form or another, (but he was not worth mentioning), because time could not have come upon 'man' if he was in a state of pure non-existence [Al-'adam-ul- mahd]. Therefore, most commentators say that the 'period of time' here refers to the period when he was conceived in the mother's womb till his birth, which normally is nine months. This period covers all the stages of his creation, right from his being a sperm-drop up to his having a body and organs, and then his acquiring life and soul. During this time, he is thought existent, neither his gender is known to anyone, nor his name or his shape or size. Therefore, he is unmentionable.

The statement of the verse may also be taken in a wider sense. The inception of human creation takes place with the sperm that is produced by food. This food and its source and substance was existent in one or

other form. If the period of that time is calculated, this long indefinite period of time can stretch into thousands of years. In any case, Allah has drawn man's attention in this verse to a particular fact. If he uses his sense, he will discover his own reality. In addition, he will have no choice but to have complete faith and unshaken belief in the Allah, His Omniscience and His Omnipotence. Suppose, a person of seventy years reflects that he was unmentionable in any way about seventy-one years ago, even his grand parents had not imagined his particular existence, though they might have had a general concept of a child, then what caused his creation, what bewildering power drew together particles from different parts of the world to form a perfect human being, making him an intelligent, a hearing and seeing creature? Such a reflection will spontaneously force such a person to confirm the Persian poet who says:

ما نبودیم و تقاضا مانبود......لطف تو ناگفته ما می شنود

Neither we were there, nor was there any demand from us.
It is only Your mercy that listened to what we never said.

Verse [2] describes the inception of human creation thus:

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ (We have created man from a mixed sperm-drop __76:2). The word *amshāj* is the plural of *mashj* or *mashīj* which means a 'mixture'. Here obviously it refers to the male and female gametes according to most commentators, but some commentators say, as cited in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, that *amshaj* refers to the four fluids of the body [blood, phlegm, choler and melancholy] of which the sperm is composed .

Man Is Made up of Particles from Different Parts of the World

If we reflect carefully, the cardinal fluids are made up of various kinds of nutriment. If we reflect further on man's food, it contains elements of water and air from distant parts of the globe. Thus, if we were to analyse man's present body, we will discover that it is composed of elements and particles that were scattered in every nook and corner of the world. A marvellous system set by Allah has, in a wonderful way, put them together in human structure. If this sense of *amshāj* 'mixed' is taken into account here, it allays the greatest doubt of the rejecters of Resurrection. Their main objection is that when they are dead, reduced to crumbled bones and dust, how will they be raised to life again? They thought this was impossible.

The interpretation of *amshāj* as 'cardinal humours/fluids' allays their doubt once and for all. At the inception, when man was created, he was composed of particles and elements from all parts of the world. Allah did not find this difficult the first time. Why should He find its recreation difficult the second time. According to this interpretation, the addition of the word '*amshāj*' (mixed) could have a special significance of its own. And Allah knows best!

نَبْتَلِيْهِ (to put him to a test...76:2). The Arabic verb is derived from *ibtila'* which means 'to put to test'. This phrase puts forward the Wisdom underlying human creation. Allah has created man to put him to a test. This test is defined in forthcoming verses. Allah sent Prophets and celestial Books for the purpose of showing him both ways, one leading to Paradise, and the other to Hell. Man has been given a choice to adopt any one of the two ways. This led mankind into two groups, thus:

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيْلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَّإِمَّا كَفُوْرًا (We have shown him the way to (let him) become either grateful or ungrateful...76:3). The first group was of those who, appreciating Allah's bounties, offered gratitude to Allah, and believed in Him, while the second group was of those who remained ungrateful to Allah's favours, disbelieved. After the description of the two groups, the next verse describes the punishment and evil consequences of the disbelievers. Allah has prepared, for the disbelievers, shackles and iron-collars and a blazing Fire. On the other hand, huge bounties are mentioned for the believers and righteous people. Out of these bounties, drinkables are mentioned first. They will have a drink from a goblet, blended with (a drink from) Camphor.

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُوْنَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُوْرًا (The righteous will have a drink from a goblet, blended with [a drink from] Camphor....76:5). Some of the commentators say that *kāfūr* (Camphor) refers to a fountain in Paradise. In order to enhance the taste and pleasure of this drink, it will be mixed with water from this spring. If the word 'camphor' is taken in its popular sense, it does not necessarily signify that the camphor of Paradise be equated with the camphor available in this world, because the latter is not palatable.

عَيْنًا يَّشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللّٰهِ (that will be a spring from which Allah's slaves will drink...76:6). Grammatically, *'ainan* (spring) is a complement [*badal*] to *kāfūran* which explains *Kāfūr*. Given this construction, it becomes certain

that *Kāfūr* is the name of a spring. However, if the word *'ainan* is taken as an explanation to *ka's* (goblet), the meaning would be that the goblet will contain a drink from a spring specified for Allah's slaves. In this case, it is also possible that the term 'Allah's slaves' refers to a category other than 'Abrār' (Righteous).

يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ (They [are the ones who] fulfil the vows...76:7). This describes the reason why the righteous believers and Allah's slaves will receive these favours and bounties. This verse signifies that whenever they vow to do a good act, they invariably fulfil the vow. The word 'vow' literally means 'to take upon oneself an obligation which Sharī'ah has not obligated on him'. Once a vow is taken, it becomes obligatory to fulfil it. Here it is stated that great rewards and favours for the inmates of Paradise would be apportioned to them because they fulfilled the vow. The verse indicates that when they are so particular about fulfilling their vows that are taken by them upon themselves, they would be even more particular about fulfilling the obligations enjoined upon them by Allah. Thus 'the fulfilment of vows' covers the entire spectrum of religious obligations. They would receive the favours of Paradise, if they completely obey Allah and rigorously apply His sacred laws. In any case, this statement emphasises the importance and obligation of fulfilment of vows.

Ruling

There are several conditions that must be met before a vow can be constituted: [1] The vow must be legitimate and permissible - not a sin. If a person swears an oath to commit a sinful act, it is necessary for him to break the oath, and pay the expiation for violating it.(1) [2] It must not be legislated by Allah as an obligatory duty, as for instance if a person were

(1) It should be noted that in the original text of Ma'ārif-ul-Qur'ān, the expression is such that the vow may be confused by a layman with oath. To understand the point, it should be borne in mind that if a person makes a vow to commit a sin, like telling a lie, or drinking liquor, this vow is not recognized in Shrī'ah. It is necessary for such a person to abstain from the sin, and since the vow is not recognized by the Sharī'ah, no expiation (*kaffārah*) is needed. However, it is the rule about oath that has been mentioned in the text above. That is, if someone swears an oath to tell a lie, for example, he has to break the oath and offer *kaffārah*.

(Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

to vow that he will perform the prescribed prayer or *witr* prayer, the vow would be null and void, because it is already a prescribed obligation. [3] According to Imām A'ẓam Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى, it is also a condition that the vowed act must be an act of worship in itself, and such act of worship should belong to those forms of worship which have been made obligatory in some way or the other, as for instance prayers, fasting, charity, sacrifice and so on. If the vowed act is not prescribed as a worship, such a vow will be void. For instance, if a person were to vow that he will pay a visit to a sickly patient, or follow a funeral procession, this vow will not be valid, because although these acts carry rewards as acts of worship, yet they are not acts, of worship in themselves (*Al-'Ibādāt-ul- Maqsūdah*). Detailed rules and principles related to vows and oaths are available in books of jurisprudence.

وَيُطْعِمُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّيَتِيْمًا وَّاَسِيْرًا (and they give food, despite their love for it, to the needy, and the orphan, and the captive...76:8). The other reason why the inmates of Paradise will receive these favours is given in this verse, that is, their feeding the needy, the orphans and the captives.

علٰی حُبِّهٖ (despite their love for it). This would mean that they give food to the needy while they themselves love it and desire it__ not that they eat to their fill and give the left-over food to the needy and poor. That feeding the poor and orphans is a form of worship and attracts reward is obvious. The word 'captive' refers to all prisoners, Muslim criminals, as well as infidels who are kept in prisons according to the principles of Sharī'ah. It is the responsibility of the Islamic government to feed them. Anyone who feeds them is actually assisting the government and the public treasury. Therefore, feeding the prisoners, even Non-Muslims, is an act of reward. In the early days of Islam, especially, feeding the prisoners and taking care of them or protecting them was a responsibility that was shared by the general body of Muslims, as it happened with the prisoners of the Battle of Badr.

قَوَارِيْرَا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ (vessels of silver...76:16). Silver vessels in this world are dense which can never be like glass, and that which is made of glass can never be silver. Thus silver and glass are two contradictory concepts in this world. However, it is a characteristic of Paradise that its glasses will be as bright as silver, and as transparent and sparkling as crystal.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said: "The blessings given in Paradise have their likes in this world also, except these vessels that are made of silver, but as transparent as a mirror."

وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا (And they will be served with a goblet of drink blended with ginger...76:17). The word *zanjabīl* means 'ginger'. The Arabs loved that their drink should be mixed with ginger. Therefore, it is mentioned in the context of Paradise [so that they are served with drinks flavoured with ginger of paradisiacal quality and splendour]. Some scholars say that the only thing the blessings of Paradise and the blessings of this world share in common is their name, and they have nothing else in common. Therefore, the 'ginger' of this world cannot be equated with the 'ginger' of Paradise.

وَحُلُّوٓا أَسَاوِرَ مِن فِضَّةٍ (...And they will be adorned by bracelets of silver...76:21). The *asāwir* is the plural of *siwar* that refers to a 'bracelet'. It is a piece of jewellery worn around the wrist. This verse speaks of 'silver bracelets'. On another occasion [22:23], the Qur'ān speaks of *asāwira min dhahab* 'gold bracelets'. There is no discrepancy between the two verses, because sometimes the silver bracelets will be worn, and at other times the gold bracelets, or some will wear gold bracelets and others will wear silver bracelets.

However, a question arises in any case: A bracelet looks good on women, but does not suit men. Why will the men of Paradise wear bracelets? The Answer is that suitability of any piece of jewellery to men or women depends on custom. The style and appeal of jewellery differ from country to country and vary from nation to nation. In some cultures, a piece of jewellery is treated as highly inappropriate for men, and in other cultures it is regarded as highly beautiful and elegant. The Chosros [Persian kings] used to wear bracelets around their wrists, and various kinds of jewellery used to be studded on their chest and crown. This was counted as a distinctive feature of their prestige and honour. After the conquest of Persian empire, the treasures that fell into Muslims' hands contained the Persian Emperor's bracelets. Thus the various cultures and nations differ in their taste for jewellery in this very world. The flair and taste for jewellery for men in Paradise cannot be equated with their flair for it in this world.

إِنَّ هٰذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَآءً وَّكَانَ سَعْيُكُم مَّشْكُورًا ([It will be said to them,] "This is a reward for you, and your effort has been appreciated....76:22). Allah will address the inmates of Paradise once they have entered Paradise, and will announce to them that the amazing bounties are granted to them as a reward for their good deeds they had done in the world, and their deeds have been appreciated by Allah. These expressions will be made to them by way of congratulation. For the people of love, the Divine congratulatory expressions will outweigh all the other blessings of Paradise put together. The congratulatory words are a proof positive of Divine pleasure.

Having mentioned the general blessings of the inmates of Paradise, special blessings that are conferred on the Holy Prophet ﷺ are listed. Firstly, the blessing in the form of the revelation of the Qur'ān is mentioned. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is, then, directed that the opponents and obdurate non-believers will obstinately reject the message and persecute him. So, he is to submit patiently to Allah's decision, and he should not obey any sinner or ungrateful person. Secondly, he is commanded to pronounce the name of Allah, and worship Him day and night. Further, he should prostrate before Him, during the night, and pronounce His purity for long times at night. This preoccupation will serve as a remedy for the non-believers' persecution. Towards the conclusion of the passage, the verse shows the reason for the persistence of the obdurate infidels. These ignoramus are intoxicated with the fleeting pleasures of this world, and have neglected the Hereafter, whereas if they had pondered in their own being or existence, they would have recognised and understood their Creator and Maker.

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنٰهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَآ اَسْرَهُمْ وَاِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَآ اَمْثَالَهُمْ تَبْدِيْلًا. (We have created them and have made their joints strong. And whenever We will, We would replace them with others like them, a total replacement....76:28)

Miracles of Nature Respecting Human Joints

This verse alludes to the fact that even though man's limbs and organs are perpetually in motion, and the wear and tear on them is phenomenal, they continue to function from birth to death. When machines made of iron or steel wear out and require regular servicing to

remain functioning for even a short period, man's body, made of soft tissues and muscles, functions for decades and scores of years without maintenance. Let us take the joints of the fingers [or other joints of the human body]. They are moved vigorously in different ways in an uncountable number of times. Heavy pressure and force is applied to them for seventy to eighty years [on an average], yet the finger-joints [and other joints] remain intact. It is certainly only Allah Who makes this possible. 'Glorious is Allah, the Best of Creators!'

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ad-Dahr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mursalāt

(Those Sent)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 50 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 50

وَالْمُرْسَلٰتِ عُرْفًا ﴿١﴾ فَالْعٰصِفٰتِ عَصْفًا ﴿٢﴾ وَّالنّٰشِرٰتِ نَشْرًا ﴿٣﴾
فَالْفٰرِقٰتِ فَرْقًا ﴿٤﴾ فَالْمُلْقِيٰتِ ذِكْرًا ﴿٥﴾ عُذْرًا اَوْ نُذْرًا ﴿٦﴾ اِنَّمَا
تُوْعَدُوْنَ لَوَاقِعٌ ﴿٧﴾ فَاِذَا النُّجُوْمُ طُمِسَتْ ﴿٨﴾ وَاِذَا السَّمَآءُ
فُرِجَتْ ﴿٩﴾ وَاِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ ﴿١٠﴾ وَاِذَا الرُّسُلُ اُقِّتَتْ ﴿١١﴾
لِاَيِّ يَوْمٍ اُجِّلَتْ ﴿١٢﴾ لِيَوْمِ الْفَصْلِ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا يَوْمُ
الْفَصْلِ ﴿١٤﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ اَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ
﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ نُتْبِعُهُمُ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ كَذٰلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾
وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ اَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُّمْ مِّنْ مَّآءٍ مَّهِيْنٍ ﴿٢٠﴾
فَجَعَلْنٰهُ فِيْ قَرَارٍ مَّكِيْنٍ ﴿٢١﴾ اِلٰى قَدَرٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَقَدَرْنَا فَنِعْمَ
الْقٰدِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْاَرْضَ
كِفَاتًا ﴿٢٥﴾ اَحْيَآءً وَّاَمْوَاتًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَّجَعَلْنَا فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ شٰمِخٰتٍ
وَّاَسْقَيْنٰكُمْ مَّآءً فُرَاتًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنْطَلِقُوْٓا
اِلٰى مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنْطَلِقُوْٓا اِلٰى ظِلٍّ ذِيْ ثَلٰثِ شُعَبٍ

﴿٣٠﴾ لَّا ظَلِيلٍ وَّلَا يُغْنِي مِنَ اللَّهَبِ ﴿٣١﴾ إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ
﴿٣٢﴾ كَأَنَّهُ جِمٰلَتٌ صُفْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ هٰذَا
يَوْمُ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ
لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ هٰذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ جَمَعْنٰكُمْ وَالْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَإِنْ
كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيدُونِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ إِنَّ
الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلٰلٍ وَّعُيُونٍ ﴿٤١﴾ وَّفَوَاكِهَ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ كُلُوا
وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيْٓـًٔا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ إِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ كُلُوا وَتَمَتَّعُوا
قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُّجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ
لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَبِأَيِّ
حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

(I swear) by those (winds) that are sent one after the other, [1] and by those that blow violently, [2] and by those that spread (clouds) all over, [3] and by those (angels) who differentiate (between right and wrong) distinctly, [4] then bring down the advice, [5] providing excuses (for the believers) or giving warnings (to the disbelievers), [6] that which you are promised is sure to happen. [7] So, when the stars will be extinguished, [8] and when the sky will be split, [9] and when the mountains will be blown away as dust, [10] and when the messengers will be assembled at the appointed time, (then all matters will be decided.) [11] (Do you know) for which day has all this been delayed? [12] For the Day of Decision! [13] And what may let you know what the Day of Decision is? [14] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [15]

Did We not destroy the earlier people? [16] Then We will cause the later ones to follow them. [17] Thus We deal with the guilty ones. [18] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [19] Did We not create you from a worthless fluid? [20] Then We put it in a firm place of rest [21] for a known

period. [22] **Thus, We did (all this with perfect) measure; so We are the best to measure.** [23] **Woe, that Day, to the deniers!** [24]

Did We not make the earth a container that collects [25] **the living and the dead?** [26] **And We placed towering mountains therein, and provided you with sweet water to drink.** [27] **Woe, that Day, to the deniers!** [28] **(It will be said to them that day,) "Push on to what you used to deny.** [29] **Push on to a canopy (of Hell's smoke) having three branches,** [30] **that neither has a comfortable shade, nor is it of any use against the scorching heat.** [31] **It emits sparks (as huge) as castles,** [32] **as if they were yellowish camels.** [33] **Woe, that Day, to the deniers!** [34] **This is a day when they will not speak,** [35] **nor will they be allowed to offer excuses.** [36] **Woe, that Day, to the deniers!** [37] **(It will be said to them,) "This is the Day of Decision. We have assembled you and the earlier ones together.** [38] **Now, if you have a trick, use the trick against Me."** [39] **Woe, that Day, to the deniers!** [40]

Of course, the God-fearing will be amid shades and streams, [41] **and fruits of their desire.** [42] **It will be said to them, "Eat and drink with pleasure because of what you used to do."** [43] **This is how We reward those who do good.** [44] **Woe, that Day, to the deniers!** [45] **"(O disbelievers,) eat and drink for a while! You are guilty ones."** [46] **Woe, that Day, to the deniers!** [47] **And when it is said to them, "Bow down (i.e. submit to Allah's commands')", they do not bow down.** [48] **Woe, that Day, to the deniers!** [49] **Now, in which discourse, after this, will they believe?** [50]

Commentary

Occasion of Revelation

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ that he said:

> "While we were with Allah's Messenger in a cave at Minā, the Sūrah 'wal-Mursalāt' was revealed to him. He was reciting it, and I was learning it from his mouth. Verily, his mouth was moist with it, when a snake leaped out at us. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'Kill it!' So we quickly went after it, but it got away. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'It was saved from your harm, just as you all were saved from its harm'." [Ibn Kathīr].

Allah swears oaths in this Sūrah by various phenomena to assert that the Resurrection will certainly take place. The names of the phenomena are not mentioned in the Qur'ān, but their five attributes are given in the following manner (The translation is given below without explanatory brackets for a better understanding of the point):

[1] (I swear) by those that are sent one after the other, (77:1)

[2] and by those that blow violently, (77:2)

[3] and by those that spread all over, (77:3)

[4] and by those who differentiate (between right and wrong) distinctly, (77:4)

[5] then bring down the advice, (77:5)

There is no traceable Ḥadīth that gives the exact interpretation of the phenomena described. Therefore, the interpretation assigned to them by the Companions and their pupils differ. Some scholars say that all five attributes refer to angels. Others say that possibly different groups of angels are bearers of the attributes. Yet other scholars say that they refer to various types of winds. Some authorities on Tafsīr say that they refer to Allah's Prophets and Messengers. Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī says that, in this matter, it is safer to observe silence. He says that both possibilities exist, but he prefers not to side with any particular interpretation. There is no doubt about the fact that some of the attributes are more appropriately applicable to the angels of Allah, and cannot fit the winds without unusual stretch of imagination, and others are more appropriately applicable to winds, and cannot apply to angels without a fanciful stretch of imagination. Therefore, Ibn Kathīr's approach seems to be the best. He says that in the first three verses of this Sūrah, Allah swears oaths by various types of winds. In verses [4] and [5], Allah swears oaths by the angels.

If verses [4] and [5] are applied to the winds, then the imagination will have to be stretched far to interpret them . Likewise, if the first three verses [*mursalāt, 'Āṣifāt* and *nashirāt*] are applied to the angels, they have no choice but to assign far-fetched interpretation. According to Ibn Kathīr, the verses signify '(I swear) by those (winds) that are sent one after the other'. The word *'urfan* could signify 'beneficial and useful'. The

winds that bring rain are obviously beneficial and useful. Another meaning of the word *'urfan* is 'one after another'. In this interpretation, the verse signifies 'those winds that bring rain and clouds consecutively'. The word *'āṣifāt* is derived from *'aṣf* that literally means 'winds that blow violently or vehemently'. This refers to fiercely blowing winds that sometimes do occur in the world. The word *nashirāt* refers to 'winds that spread (clouds) all over after the rain is over'. The word *fāriqāt* is the attribute of the angels 'who differentiate (between right and wrong) distinctly by bringing down the Divine revelation'. The phrase *fal-mulqiyāti dhikran* also refers to the 'angels'. The word *dhikr* 'Reminder' refers to the Qur'ān or revelation in general. The verse signifies 'I swear by angels who [by bringing down revelation] separate between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, [and the lawful and the forbidden]'. Likewise, I swear by angels who bring down revelation or Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This interpretation is plain and simple, and does not require any undue stretch of imagination.

In this interpretation, the question arises as to the contextual relationship between swearing oaths by various types of winds and the angels. First of all, it is not possible to fathom the Wisdom of Divine speech. However, it is possible to hypothesise. Allah swears oaths by useful winds and harmful winds. Winds that bring rain and clouds are useful, while those that blow fiercely and cause destruction are harmful. These belong to the perceptible world. All human beings can observe them. The perceptible things are mentioned first for reflection. The imperceptible world is mentioned later, such as the angels and revelation. If man reflects carefully on them, he will develop certainty of belief in them as well.

عُذْرًا اَوْنُذْرًا (to provide excuses [for the believers] or giving warnings (to disbelievers...77:6) This phrase is complement to verse [5]: فَالْمُلْقِيٰتِ ذِكْرًا 'then bring down the advice, [77:5] The 'advice' refers to the 'revelation' that came down upon the Prophets. Verse 6 says that it serves two purposes. In the case of the people of truth and believers, it persuades them to seek excuse from Allah for their shortcomings, and pray for forgiveness; and in the case of the people of falsehood and disbelievers, it contains a warning for them of Allah's torment, if they oppose His command.

اِنَّمَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لَوَاقِعٌ (...that which you are promised is sure to happen...77:7)

This is the subject of these oaths. It means that the Day of Judgement, Reckoning, and Reward and Punishment that is promised by the Prophets has certainly to be fulfilled. Allah then describes some of the events that will occur on the Day of Judgement. The stars will be extinguished, which could mean that they will be completely destroyed, or they will exist, but their lights will be lost. In this way the entire world will be plunged in absolute darkness. The second event to occur is the splitting of the sky. The third event to occur is that the mountains will be blown away as dust. The fourth event is described in the following verse:

وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ أُقِّتَتْ (and when the messengers will be assembled at the appointed time, [then all matters will be decided.] [77:11]' The word *uqqitat* is derived from *tauqīt* which primarily means 'appointment of time'. According to Zamakhsharī, it signifies 'to arrive at an appointed time' [as cited in Rūḥ]. In this context, the second meaning appears to be more appropriate. The verse signifies that the appointed time for the Prophets and Messengers to assemble with their communities will arrive, so that all matters concerning them may be decided. The verses further describe the Day of Judgement as the great and horrible day and the Day of Decision. It shall be the day of destruction for the deniers and rejecters, thus:

وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ (Woe, that Day, to the deniers!...77:15) The word *wail* means 'destruction'. According to certain Ḥadīth narratives, the word wail is a 'valley of Hell where the pus of the wounds of the inmates of Hell will be collected. This is the place where the deniers will live. After this, the present-day people are asked to learn a lesson from [the destruction] of the former generations, thus:

أَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْأَوَّلِيْنَ (Did We not destroy the earlier people?...77:16) It refers to the nations of 'Ād, Thamūd, nation of Lūṭ عليه السلام and Fir'aun (The Pharaoh) who were destroyed because of their obstinacy.

ثُمَّ نُتْبِعُهُمُ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ (Then We will cause the later ones to follow them....77:17) According to popular reading, Verse 17 purports to say that the present-day infidels, the people of Makkah, will receive punishment soon. They were punished and destroyed by Muslims in the Battle of Badr and so on. The difference between the punishment of former nations and the community of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is as follows: The former nations used

to be destroyed by celestial punishment with all their habitations. The infidels in the community of the Holy Prophet ﷺ do not receive celestial punishment, because of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ special honour. They are punished by the weapons of Muslims. Furthermore, the destruction is not general. Only the obdurate criminal leaders are destroyed.

اَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْاَرْضَ كِفَاتًا. اَحْيَآءً وَّاَمْوَاتًا (Did We not make the earth a container that collects the living and the dead?....25, 26) The word *kifāt* is derived from *kaft*. It means 'to gather things together'. Thus *kifāt* is a thing that embodies many things within itself. Earth is created by Allah in a fashion that humans when alive, remain on its back, and when dead, in its belly.

اِنَّهَا تَرْمِىْ بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ. كَاَنَّه' جِمٰلَتٌ صُفْرٌ (It emits sparks [as huge] as castles...77:32) The word *qaṣr* means a 'huge, magnificent castle'. The word *jimālah* is used in the sense of *jamal*, and means 'camel'. The word *ṣufr* is the plural of *aṣfar* which means 'yellow'. The verse describes the fire of Hell. It will emit such huge sparks of fire, as if they were huge and magnificent castles. Then they will break up into little splinters, as if they were yellowish camels. Some scholars have translated the word '*ṣufr*' as 'black' because yellowish colour of camels tends to blackness. [Rūḥ].

هٰذَا يَوْمُ لَايَنْطِقُوْنَ. وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُوْنَ (This is a day when they will not speak, nor will they be allowed to offer excuses....77:35, 36) In other words, this is the Day in which they will not be able to talk, nor will they be permitted to offer pleas for their misdeeds. However, other verses of the Qur'ān inform us that they will speak and will be permitted to offer excuses. There is no discrepancy between the two verses, because there will be various stages on the Plain of Gathering (*Maḥshar*) through which people will have to pass. Sometimes they will pass through a stage where it would be forbidden for them to speak or offer excuses; and at another stage they will be permitted. [Rūḥ].

كُلُوْا وَتَمَتَّعُوْا قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ مُّجْرِمُوْنَ ("Eat and drink for a while! You are guilty ones...77:46) This verse addresses the infidels through the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They may eat and drink and enjoy themselves in this world, but the span is short, and then there will be nothing but punishment for them. [Abū Ḥayyān].

وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوْا لَا يَرْكَعُوْنَ (And when it is said to them, "Bow down", they do not bow down...77:48) According to most commentators, the word *rukū'*

is used here in its primitive sense 'to bow down and submit'. The verse signifies that when they were told to submit to the Divine commands, they refused to comply. Some scholars take the word *rukū'* in its technical sense and interpret the verse to signify 'when they are called to prayer, they refused to pray.' The *rukū'* is a part of the prayer, but it refers here to the whole prayer . [Rūḥ]

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيْثٍ بَعْدَه' يُؤْمِنُوْنَ (Now, in which discourse, after this, will they believe? ...77:50) The Holy Qur'ān is the last Book of Allah which explains its message and wisdom most lucidly, excellently, eloquently, elegantly, and its arguments most convincingly. Its style is extremely effective and the admonition soul-capturing. If they do not believe in such a Book, then for which word are they waiting? This is to express disappointment in them. A Ḥadīth narrative instructs that when one recites this verse, he should say 'I believe in Allah'. This statement must be made outside the prayer, or in voluntary prayer. He must abstain from this statement in obligatory and *Sunnah* prayer. Ḥadīth narratives are clear on this point. And Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mursalāt
Ends here

Sūrah An-Naba'

(The Great Event)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 40 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 40

عَمَّ يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿١﴾ عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِىْ هُمْ فِيْهِ مُخْتَلِفُوْنَ
﴿٣﴾ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ
الْاَرْضَ مِهٰدًا ﴿٦﴾ وَّالْجِبَالَ اَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾ وَّخَلَقْنٰكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾
وَّجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴿٩﴾ وَّجَعَلْنَا الَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَّجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ
مَعَاشًا ﴿١١﴾ وَّبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَّجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا
وَّهَّاجًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَّاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرٰتِ مَآءً ثَجَّاجًا ﴿١٤﴾ لِّنُخْرِجَ بِهٖ
حَبًّا وَّنَبَاتًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَّجَنّٰتٍ اَلْفَافًا ﴿١٦﴾ اِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيْقَاتًا
﴿١٧﴾ يَّوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِى الصُّوْرِ فَتَاْتُوْنَ اَفْوَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَّفُتِحَتِ السَّمَآءُ
فَكَانَتْ اَبْوَابًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَّسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ﴿٢٠﴾ اِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ
كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ﴿٢١﴾ لِّلطّٰغِيْنَ مَاٰبًا ﴿٢٢﴾ لّٰبِثِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَحْقَابًا ﴿٢٣﴾
لَايَذُوْقُوْنَ فِيْهَا بَرْدًا وَّلَا شَرَابًا ﴿٢٤﴾ اِلَّا حَمِيْمًا وَّغَسَّاقًا ﴿٢٥﴾ جَزَآءً
وِّفَاقًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا لَا يَرْجُوْنَ حِسَابًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَّكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا
كِذَّابًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَكُلَّ شَىْءٍ اَحْصَيْنٰهُ كِتٰبًا ﴿٢٩﴾ فَذُوْقُوْا فَلَنْ نَّزِيْدَكُمْ

إِلَّا عَذَابًا ﴿٣٠﴾ إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا ﴿٣١﴾ حَدَآئِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا ﴿٣٢﴾
وَّكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَّكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا ﴿٣٤﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَّلَا
كِذّٰبًا ﴿٣٥﴾ جَزَآءً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ عَطَآءً حِسَابًا ﴿٣٦﴾ رَّبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمٰنِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾ يَوْمَ
يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ صَفًّا لَّا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمٰنُ
وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلٰى رَبِّهِ مَاٰبًا
﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّآ أَنْذَرْنٰكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَّوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ
وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يٰلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرٰبًا ﴿٤٠﴾

About what are they asking each other? [1] **About the Great Event** [2] **in which they dispute!** [3] **Truly, they will soon know.** [4] **Again, truly, they will soon know.** [5] **Did We not make the earth as a floor,** [6] **and the mountains as pegs?** [7] **And We have created you in pairs,** [8] **and made your sleep a source of rest,** [9] **and made the night a covering,** [10] **and made the day a source of livelihood.** [11] **And We have built seven strong (skies),** [12] **and created a luminous lamp (the sun).** [13] **And We have sent down from the rain-laden clouds abundant water,** [14] **so that We bring out therewith grain and vegetation,** [15] **and thick gardens.** [16]

Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time, [17] **a day when the trumpet will be blown, so you will come in multitudes,** [18] **and the sky will be opened, so it will become as gates,** [19] **and the mountains will be set in motion, so they will be as mirage.** [20] **Surely Jahannam (the Hell) is set in ambush.** [21] **(It is) an abode for the rebellious people** [22] **who will be abiding in it for ages.** [23] **They will taste nothing cool in it, nor a drink,** [24] **except boiling water and pus,** [25] **this being a recompense in full accord (with their deeds).** [26] **They did not expect (to face) accounting (of their deeds),** [27] **and they rejected Our signs totally.** [28] **And everything (from their deeds) is thoroughly recorded by Us in writing.** [29] **"So now taste! We will never add to you**

anything except torment." [30]

For the God-fearing there is sure achievement, [31] **gardens and grapes,** [32] **and buxom maidens of matching age,** [33] **and goblets filled up to the brim.** [34] **They will not hear therein any vain talk, nor lies,** [35] **this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant,** [36] **(from) the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, the All-Merciful. No one will have power to address Him,** [37] **on the Day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows. They will not speak, except the one who is permitted by the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful) and speaks aright.** [38] **That is the Day which is sure to come. So whoever so wishes may take refuge with his Lord.** [39] **We have warned you of an approaching torment (that will be inflicted) on a day when one will see what his hands have sent ahead, and the disbeliever will say, "O would that I had become dust!"** [40]

Commentary

عَمَّ يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ (About what are they asking each other?...78:1). The word *'amma* is made up of two particles: [1] The preposition عَنْ *'an* (about); and [2] the interrogative particle مَا *'mā'* (what?) (the last letter, that is, *'mā'* has been omitted according to the grammatical composition. The sense is : About what are they asking each other?' Allah Himself replies to the question when He says:

عَنِ النَّبَإِ الْعَظِيْمِ الَّذِىْ هُمْ فِيْهِ مُخْتَلِفُوْنَ (About the Great Event in which they dispute!....78:2,3). The word *naba'* means 'news' but not every news is *naba'*. It means a 'momentous news of a great event'. This refers to the news of the Day of Judgement. The verse purports to convey that the inhabitants of Makkah ask about the Day of Judgement in which they dispute [while some of them believed in Resurrection, others did not.]

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ reports that when the revelation of Qur'ān started, the pagan Arabs used to form circles and discuss and criticise it, especially about the tremendous import of Resurrection and Judgement referred to in the Qur'ān. The pagans thought this was impossible, and they used to have protracted discussion. The disbelievers persuade themselves to believe that the predicted event will never take place,

though there were others who believed in the event. The Sūrah opens by shunning the enquirers and the enquiry, it wonders that anyone should raise any doubts about Resurrection and Judgement. Some of the commentators express the opinion that their enquiry was not a genuine one where they were keen to learn about the truth. So they ask half-mockingly and half in doubt, when that event, so loudly pronounced, will happen. Qur'ān has responded by asserting one statement twice for emphasis, thus:

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ. ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ (Truly, they will soon know. Again, truly, they will soon know....78:5) The particle *kallā* is negative, and means 'never, by no means'. It means here that this matter cannot be understood by question and answer or by disputation and debate. Its reality will be understood by them when they will face it. It is such a reality that has no room for questions, disputation or denial. The Qur'ān says that soon they will come to know about it [and this statement is repeated twice for emphasis]. In other words, when they die, they will discover the realities of the next world. They will see the horrors of the Hereafter with their eyes.

Then the Holy Qur'ān has pointed to different demonstrations of His power to prove that it is not impossible for Allah to destroy this entire world and re-create it once again. Reference is made to the creation of earth, mountains, human beings, males and females and the creation of suitable conditions for human life, health and activities. One of the things mentioned in this connection is :

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتاً (and made your sleep a source of rest,...78:9). The word *subāt* is derived from *sabt* which means 'to cut off'. Sleep is something that cuts off the worries and tensions one may have, and thus gives him such a rest that cannot be attained from anything else. Therefore, some scholars translate the word *subāt* as 'rest'.

Sleep Is a Great Gift

After mentioning in verse [8] that Allah has created mankind in pairs, Allaah Ta'ālā states in verse [9] that among the means of their comfort, He created sleep, which is a great divine gift. Sleep is a great source of relaxation for the entire creation - for rich as well as for poor, for learned

people, as well as for the illiterate ones, for kings as well as for labourers. This gift is made available equally and simultaneously for all. Rather, experience shows that this gift is most readily available to the poor and labouring class, as compared to the affluent and the elite class. The latter class has all the means of comfort, they have comfortable homes, they have moderately warm and cold places, they have comfortable mattresses and pillows that are rarely available to the poor. But the gift of sleep is not dependent upon the mattresses, pillows, cottages and bungalows. It is purely a divine gift that is given directly by Allah. Often the poor, with no means of comfort and without bed or bedding, enjoy the best sleep in an open space. Sometimes, the affluent and the men of means suffer from insomnia and can only get sleep when they take sleeping pills. Often the pills do not work either. Not only that this great gift is given to all creatures - humans as well as animals - and it is given free of charge, without working for it. Allah has made it compulsory for everyone in a way that even if he wishes to keep awake because of load of work, sleep is imposed on him by Allah's mercy, so that his tiredness is removed and he is refreshed to work further. This arrangement is a wonderful means of providing rest and peace for man.

وَّجَعَلْنَا الَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا (and made the night a covering...78:10) This points to the fact that man naturally feels sleepy when light decreases and darkness prevails, when there is tranquillity all around and there is absence of noises. The verse under comment additionally signifies that Allah did not only give man sleep, but created in the entire world conditions that are suitable for sleep. That is to say: [1] darkness of night; [2] the state of sleep is imposed on all humans and animals simultaneously, so that they sleep at the same time. In this way, there will be peace and tranquillity throughout the world. Like other works, if there are different times for different people to sleep, no one will have peace and tranquillity.

Thereafter the verse reads:

وَّجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا (and made the day a source of livelihood....78:11). Man requires, together with sleep, other essentials of life, such as livelihood. Otherwise, the sleep will turn into death. If the world would have had only nights and no days, and man would have continued to sleep all the time, how would he have obtained his livelihood and other essentials,

whereas day is the time when he could work hard and make activities in the daylight in order to earn a living. Thus the verses under comment purport to say that Allah has, in order to complete the comforts of life, made the night a cloak and the day for earning a living. وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَّهَّاجًا.

Now attention is drawn to the comforts we get from the sky. The most useful thing in the sky is the light of the sun. It is mentioned in the following verse: وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَّهَّاجًا (and created a luminous lamp [the sun]....78:13). Then, among the useful things below the sky, the most beneficial and the most essential thing is the raining clouds which are mentioned thus: وَّاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرٰتِ مَآءً ثَجَّاجًا (And We have sent down from the rain-laden clouds abundant water,...78:14). The word *mu'ṣirāt* is the plural of *mu'ṣirah* 'rain-laden cloud'. This indicates that rain comes down from the cloud. There are verses, however, that indicate that rain comes down from the sky. Those verses too probably refer to 'upper atmosphere'. There are many verses in the Qur'ān where the word *samā'* is used in that sense. Having mentioned these Divine blessings, the Sūrah reverts to its original theme of Resurrection and Judgement:

اِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيْقَاتًا (Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time...78:17). 'The Day of Decision' refers to the Day of Resurrection. It is a fixed appointment. Other verses indicate that the trumpet will be blown twice. When it is blown the first time, the entire world will come to an end. When it is blown the second time, people of the entire world, the earlier generations as well as the latter generations, will be resurrected and come in multitudes and droves. Sayyidnā Abu Dharr Ghifārī ﷺ reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "On the Day of Resurrection, people will come in three different groups: [1] a group will come in the Plain of Gathering whose stomach will be full, wearing clothes and riding mounts; another group will come to the Plain of Gathering bare feet; and a third group will be brought on the Plain of Gathering being dragged on their faces." [Maẓharī cites the following authorities: Nasā'ī, Ḥākim and Baihaqī]

Some narratives report ten types of group. Some scholars say that the groups on the Plain of Gathering will be divided according to their deeds and character. The narratives are not conflicting. All of them may be true.

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا (and the mountains will be set in motion, so they will be as mirage....78:20). The word *suyyirat* 'set in motion' signifies that mountains, which are taken as an example of firmness and strength, will

be shifted from their positions, and will become like little particles of dust flying about in the atmosphere. The word *sarāb* literally means 'to disappear' and it also refers to 'mirage' or an optical illusion, as of a sheet of water, that sometimes appears in a desert, because it seems to be a sheet of water from a distance, but when a person comes near it, it disappears. [Ṣiḥāḥ and Rāghib].

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا (Surely Jahannam [the Hell] is set in ambush. 78:21). The word *mirsād* means 'an ambush' or 'lying in wait to attack unawares' or 'a secret position for surprise attack'. Here Hell refers to the bridge of Hell. The angels of reward and punishment will lie in wait. The angels of punishment will make a surprise attack on the inmates of Hell, and the angels of reward will lie in wait to accompany the inmates of Paradise and take them to their abode. [Maẓharī]

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said that there will be an outpost of guardian angels on the bridge of Hell. If anyone has a permit to enter Paradise, he will be permitted to enter; but if anyone does not have the permit to enter Paradise, he will be prevented from entering it. [Qurṭubī]

لِلطَّاغِينَ مَآبًا ([It is] an abode for the rebellious people...78:22). The combined sense of verses 21 and 22 is that the bridge of Hell is set in ambush for all, the good and the bad. They will have to go over it. But Hell is the abode of the rebellious people. The word *ṭāghīn* is the plural of *ṭāghī*, being derived from *tughyan*, meaning 'rebellion'. Thus the word *ṭāghī* refers to a 'person who exceeds the limit in disobeying the authority [of Allah]'. This is possible only when he gives up his faith. Hence, the word *ṭāghīn* in this context would refer to the disbelievers. It may also refer to the stray groups of Muslims who have deviated from the limits of Qur'ān and Sunnah, though they may not have adopted *kufr* expressly, such as Rawafiḍ, Khawārij, Mu'tazilah and others. [as in Maẓharī].

لَّابِثِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا (who will be abiding in it for ages....78:23). The word *lābithīn* is the plural of *lābith* which means 'one who abides'. The word *aḥqāb* is the plural of *ḥiqbah* and means 'ages or a long time'. Scholars differ on the exact length or specific amount of time meant by this word. Ibn Jarīr has recorded that Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه states that *ḥiqbah* is eighty years, and the year constitutes twelve months, and every month comprises thirty days, and each day is equivalent to one thousand years, thus one *ḥiqbah* totalling about twenty million and eighty-eight hundred

thousand years . Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنهم and others say that one *ḥiqbah* is seventy years instead of eighty years. The rest of the calculation remains the same. [Ibn Kathīr]. In Musnad of Bazzār, Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar ﷺ traces the following Ḥadīth to the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

لايخرج احدكم من النّار حتّى يمكث فيه احقابًا، والحقب بضعٌ وثمانون سنة، كل سنة ثلثمائة وستون يوما ممّا تعدّون

"Those who will be put in Hell for punishment of their sins, they will not be able to come out until they tarry therein for a few *Aḥqāb*. One *ḥiqbah* will be a little over eighty years, and the year has three hundred and sixty days according to your reckoning [in this life]."

This Tradition, though does not interpret this verse, it does explain the sense of the word *aḥqāb*. Some of the Companions mention that one day is equivalent to a thousand years. If they had heard this from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there is conflict in the narratives. In the face of such conflict, it is not possible to settle on one narration. However, there is a common denominator between the two conflicting narratives, that *ḥiqbah* means 'an extremely long period of time'. Therefore, Baidawī has interpreted the word as 'many long periods of time successively following the others.

Problem of Eternity of Hell

If it be argued, as some do, that the inmates of Hell, after serving the long ages in Hell, will be released because no matter what the length of *ḥiqbah*, it is, nonetheless, finite and limited and will come to an end some time or other. But looking at other clear verses of the Qur'ān, the argument does not hold up. We come across express text like:

خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا

'[They, the disbelievers] shall remain therein [in the Fire] for ever'.

Therefore, there is the consensus of Ummah that neither Hell will perish, nor will the disbelievers be released at anytime.

Suddi reports from Sayyidnā Murrah Ibn 'Abdullah ﷺ that if the inmates of Hell are informed that they will abide in Hell for the number of pebbles in the entire world, they will be happy even at this information,

because these pebbles though will count into billions or zillions, still they are finite. If so, their punishment will, some time or the other, come to an end. If the same information is given to the inmates of Paradise that they will abide therein to the count of billions of pebbles in the entire world, it will sadden them, because, in that case, no matter how long the space of time they will live in Paradise, they will be expelled after this period. [Maẓharī]

In any case, the notion that after a few *aḥqāb* the disbelievers will be released from Hell is contrary to the explicit texts and common consent of the Ummah, and as such it is unworthy of consideration, because the verse does not mention what will happen after the *aḥqāb*. It merely mentions that they will have to abide in Hell 'for ages [*aḥqāb*]'. This does not necessarily imply that there will be no Hell after *aḥqāb* or its non-believing inmates will be released. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ḥasan رضي الله عنه says that no specific period has been defined for the inmates of Hell, so that they will be released after that. It is that which has no end to it. Whenever one *ḥiqbah* [era] is over, a new *ḥiqbah* will start; when the second era come to an end, a third *ḥiqbah* will start; when the third *ḥiqbah* ends, the fourth *ḥiqbah* will start; and it will carry on ad infinitum. Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه also interprets the word *aḥqāb* as referring to 'the time which has no end to it. Whenever one era ends, a new era follows it until eternity'. [Ibn Kathīr and Maẓharī]. Ibn Kathīr describes another possibility which Qurṭubī supports and Maẓharī adopts. The possibility is that the word *ṭāghīn* 'rebellious people' probably does not refer to the disbelievers, but to the people of *Tauḥīd*, who, on account of their false beliefs, fall into one of the categories of deviant groups. Traditionalists refer to them as *ahl-ul-ahwa'* 'heretics whose beliefs are not in keeping with the common consent of the People of *Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah*. In this case, the verse purports to say that they are the people of Tauḥīd, but bordered on the boundary of disbelief on account of false beliefs. They, however, did not cross into the boundary of explicit disbelief. They will therefore abide in Hell for the period of *aḥqāb*, and then discharged therefrom by virtue of the creed of *tauḥīd*.

Maẓharī, in support of this possibility, has cited the Prophetic Ḥadīth which was reported earlier on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه with reference to Musnad of Bazzār, in which the Holy Prophet

ﷺ said that after the period of *aḥqāb* has passed, these people will be taken out of Hell. Abū Ḥayyān, however, disputes this on the grounds of the verses that follow the present verse:

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا. وَّكَذَّبُوا بِاٰيٰتِنَا كِذَّابًا

(They did not expect [to face] accounting [of their deeds], and they rejected Our signs totally....78:28)

These verses contradict the possibility that *ṭāghīn* 'rebellious people' could be referring to people of Tauhid and deviant groups, because in the concluding verses it is expressly mentioned that they explicitly reject reckoning and utterly deny the Prophets عليهم السلام. Likewise Abū Ḥayyān rejects out of hand Muqatil's opinion that this verse is abrogated.

A group of commentators find a third interpretation of this verse. A statement after this verse, namely, لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَّلَا شَرَابًا إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَّغَسَّاقًا (They will taste nothing cool in it, nor a drink, except boiling water and pus...78:25) - is circumstantial clause to *aḥqāb*, in which case the verse purports to say that for the countless aeons of *aḥqāb* that they will be in Hell they will not be tasting any coolness of air nor any food or drink excepting for boiling water and [scalding] pus. When the *aḥqāb* is over, the condition may change, and other kinds of punishment may be imposed. The word *ḥamīm* means 'intensely boiling water if brought near the face, it would burn its flesh, and when put into the stomach it would cut into pieces the internal organs'. The word *ghassāq* means 'blood and pus, and washings of wounds that will ooze from the inmates of Hell'.

جَزَآءً وِّفَاقًا (this being a recompense in full accord [with their deeds].....78:26). The punishment given to them in Hell will be based on justice and equity - a fitting recompense - on account of their false beliefs and evil deeds. They will not be wronged in the least.

فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَّزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا ("So now taste! We will never add to you anything except torment."....78:30). In other words, in the world they continued to add disbelief. If death did not overtake them by coercion, they would have continued to add disbelief, and today their punishment will be increased.

Thus far the punishment of disbelievers was depicted. As opposed to this, the reward and blessings of the righteous believers are depicted below.

جَزَآءً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ عَطَآءً حِسَابًا (this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing

grant...78:36). The blessings of Paradise described above is the reward of the believers and is an abundant grant from their Lord. Here two things are mentioned. First, these blessings are a reward of their deeds. Secondly, they are a Divine grant. Apparently, they seem to be contradictory, because reward means receiving something in lieu of doing some service, whereas grant is given gratis. The Qur'ān has combined the two words in order to indicate that the blessings of Paradise are reward for the inmates of Paradise only apparently, and in reality they are a Divine grant given to them gratis, because human deeds cannot be the reward of even those blessings which were given to him in the world, let alone the blessings of the Hereafter which depend entirely on Divine grace as is confirmed by the Tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "No one can enter Paradise merely by virtue of his deeds, unless Allah shows His grace." The Companions asked: "What about you, Messenger of Allah." He replied: "Nor will I enter Paradise merely by virtue of my action."

The word *ḥisāban* has two meanings: [1] a grant [that is] sufficient [and] abundant. This meaning is adapted from the following idiom: اَحْسَبْتُ فُلَانًا اى اَعْطَيْتُه' ما يَكْفِيهِ حَتّٰى قَالَ حَسْبِىْ '*aḥsabtu* means that I gave him so much so that it was sufficient for him until he yelled out "enough, this is too much for me"; and [2] the second meaning 'balancing of account' and 'comparing'. Sayyidnā Mujāhid رحمه الله says that in this context the verse purports to say that the Divine grant will be given gratis to the inmates of Paradise. The grant will be in keeping with the degree of sincerity as reported in authentic Traditions. The deeds of the noble Companions are greater than the deeds of the rest of the Ummah. If a Companion were to spend in the way of Allah one *mudd* = [815,39 grams] and a non-Companion were to spend to the equivalent of Mount Uhud, the Companion's one *mudd* will weigh heavier than the mountain. And Allah knows best!

لَايَمْلِكُوْنَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا (...No one will have power to address Him,...78:37)

This sentence is probably connected to the preceding verse: جَزَآءً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ عَطَآءً حِسَابًا (this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant...78:36) In this case, it would mean that when Allah grants a certain grade of reward, no one dare speak about the grade as to why someone got more and others got less. But if this sentence is treated as an isolated one, it will mean that no one in the Plane of Gathering will have the power to speak to Him without His permission. This permission will be granted in some of

the positions of Gathering, and not in others.

يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الرُّوْحُ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ صَفًّا لَّا يَتَكَلَّمُوْنَ اِلَّا مَنْ اَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا (on the Day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows. They will not speak, except the on who is permitted by the Raḥmān [the All-Merciful] and speaks aright -78:38). Rūḥ (Spirit), according to some of the commentators, refers to the angel Jibra'īl عليه السلام. He has been mentioned before the other angels in general in order to show the greatness of his status. According to certain Prophetic traditions, Rūḥ is not an angel but a huge army of Allah. They have heads, hands and legs. In this interpretation, there will be two rows. One row will be that of Rūḥ and the other will be that of the angels.

يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ (...on a day when one will see what his hands have sent ahead....78:40) Apparently, this refers to the Day of Judgement. Every person will see his deeds with his own eyes in the Plane of Gathering. This might happen in one of two ways: [1] his ledger of deeds will be given in his hands and he will see it; or [2] his deeds will appear in the Plane of Gathering, epitomized in a visible shape, as certain narratives confirm this. Still a third possibility exists. The word 'day' may refer to 'the day of death'. And the words 'will see' means to see in the grave or barzakh, as explained by Maẓharī.

وَيَقُوْلُ الْكَافِرُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ كُنْتُ تُرٰبًا (and the disbeliever will say, "O would that I had become dust...78:40) Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه reports that on the Day of Resurrection the entire earth will become a plane surface where all human beings, *Jinn*, domesticated animals and wild animals will be gathered. If one animal had wronged another animal in the world, it will be given the opportunity to take its revenge. If a goat with horns had wronged a goat without horns, it will be granted the opportunity to take its avenge. When this phase is over, all animals will be commanded to become dust. They will become dust. At that moment the disbelievers will wish that they were also animals and would become dust like them, so that they would have been spared the torment of reckoning and punishment of Hell. We seek refuge in Allah from it! Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Naba'
Ends here

Sūrah An-Nāzi'āt

(Those Who Pull Out)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 46 verses and 2 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 46

وَالنّٰزِعٰتِ غَرْقًا ﴿١﴾ وَّالنّٰشِطٰتِ نَشْطًا ﴿٢﴾ وَّالسّٰبِحٰتِ سَبْحًا ﴿٣﴾
فَالسّٰبِقٰتِ سَبْقًا ﴿٤﴾ فَالْمُدَبِّرٰتِ اَمْرًا ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ﴿٦﴾
تَتْبَعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ ﴿٧﴾ قُلُوْبٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ وَّاجِفَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ اَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ ﴿٩﴾
يَقُوْلُوْنَ ءَاِنَّا لَمَرْدُوْدُوْنَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ ﴿١٠﴾ ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا نَّخِرَةً
﴿١١﴾ قَالُوْا تِلْكَ اِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فَاِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ
﴿١٣﴾ فَاِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ﴿١٤﴾ هَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ مُوْسٰى ﴿١٥﴾ اِذْ
نَادٰىهُ رَبُّهٗ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٦﴾ اِذْهَبْ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ اِنَّهٗ طَغٰى
﴿١٧﴾ فَقُلْ هَلْ لَّكَ اِلٰى اَنْ تَزَكّٰى ﴿١٨﴾ وَاَهْدِيَكَ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشٰى
﴿١٩﴾ فَاَرٰىهُ الْاٰيَةَ الْكُبْرٰى ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصٰى ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ اَدْبَرَ
يَسْعٰى ﴿٢٢﴾ فَحَشَرَ فَنَادٰى ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ اَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْاَعْلٰى ﴿٢٤﴾
فَاَخَذَهُ اللّٰهُ نَكَالَ الْاٰخِرَةِ وَالْاُوْلٰى ﴿٢٥﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَنْ
يَّخْشٰى ﴿٢٦﴾ ءَاَنْتُمْ اَشَدُّ خَلْقًا اَمِ السَّمَآءُ بَنٰىهَا ﴿٢٧﴾ رَفَعَ
سَمْكَهَا فَسَوّٰىهَا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَاَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَاَخْرَجَ ضُحٰىهَا ﴿٢٩﴾

وَالْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ دَحٰىهَا ﴿٣٠﴾ اَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَآءَهَا وَمَرْعٰىهَا ﴿٣١﴾
وَالْجِبَالَ اَرْسٰىهَا ﴿٣٢﴾ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِاَنْعَامِكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَاِذَا جَآءَتِ
الطَّآمَّةُ الْكُبْرٰى ﴿٣٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْاِنْسَانُ مَا سَعٰى ﴿٣٥﴾ وَبُرِّزَتِ
الْجَحِيْمُ لِمَنْ يَّرٰى ﴿٣٦﴾ فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى ﴿٣٧﴾ وَاٰثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا
﴿٣٨﴾ فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى ﴿٣٩﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ
وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى ﴿٤٠﴾ فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى ﴿٤١﴾
يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ اَيَّانَ مُرْسٰىهَا ﴿٤٢﴾ فِيْمَ اَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرٰىهَا
﴿٤٣﴾ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهٰىهَا ﴿٤٤﴾ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُنْذِرُ مَنْ يَّخْشٰىهَا ﴿٤٥﴾
كَاَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوْٓا اِلَّا عَشِيَّةً اَوْ ضُحٰىهَا ﴿٤٦﴾

I swear by those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the infidels) vigorously [1] and by those (angels) who untie the knot (of the souls of the believers) smoothly, [2] and by those who float (in the atmosphere) swiftly, [3] then proceed forward quickly, [4] then manage (to do) everything (they are ordered to do,) [5] (you will be resurrected) on the Day when the shocking event (i.e. the first blowing of the trumpet) will shock (everything), [6] followed by the next one (i.e. the second blowing of the trumpet.) [7] Hearts, on that Day, will be throbbing, [8] (and) their eyes will be downcast. [9]

They say, "Are we going to be brought back to our former state (of Life)? [10] Is it when we will have turned into decayed bones?" [11] They say, "If so, that will be a harmful return." [12] So, it will be only a single harsh voice, [13] and in no time they will be (brought) in the plain (of *hashr*). [14]

Has there come to you the narrative of Mūsā? [15] (Recall) when his Lord called to him in the blessed valley of Tuwa: [16] "Go to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). Indeed, he has crossed all bounds (in making mischief). [17] And say (to him,) "Would you like to purify yourself, [18] and that I guide you to your Lord, so that you fear (Him)?" [19] So he showed him the biggest sign. [20] But he rejected and disobeyed, [21] then he turned back, and

tried hard (to refute the Messenger), [22] **then he gathered (his people) and shouted** [23] **and said, "I am the supreme lord of yours."** [24] **So, Allah seized him for the deterrent punishment in the Hereafter and the present world.** [25] **Indeed, there is a lesson for him who fears (Allah).** [26]

Are you more difficult to be created or the sky? He has built it, [27] **He has raised its height, then made it proper,** [28] **and darkened its night, and brought forth its daylight,** [29] **and, after that, He spread out the earth.** [30] **From it, He brought out its water and its meadows,** [31] **and firmly fixed the mountains,** [32] **(all this) as a benefit to you and your cattle.** [33] **So when the Biggest Havoc will come** [34] **on the day when man will recall what he did,** [35] **and the Hell will be exposed for all who see,** [36] **then for the one who had rebelled,** [37] **and preferred the worldly life (to the Hereafter),** [38] **the Hell will be the abode,** [39] **whereas for the one who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained his self from the (evil) desire,** [40] **the Paradise will be the abode.** [41]

They ask you about the Hour (the Day of Judgment) as to when it will take place. [42] **In which capacity are you to tell this?** [43] **With your Lord is the final word about it.** [44] **You are only a warner for anyone who fears it.** [45] **The day they will see it, it will seem to them as if they did not live (in the world), but only for one afternoon or for the morning thereof.** [46]

Commentary

وَالنّٰزِعٰتِ غَرْقًا (I swear by those [angels] who pull out [the souls of the infidels] vigorously ...79:1). The word *nāzi'āt* is derived from *naz'* and it means 'to draw vigorously'. The word *gharqan* is its corroborative because the word *gharq* is used here in the sense of *ighrāq* and means 'to exert oneself much or to the utmost extent in the thing'. The Arabic idiom has it اغرق النّازع فى القوس 'He drew the bow with great vigour'. The Sūrah begins with an oath by certain characteristics of the angels to affirm that the Resurrection is a certainty. The subject of the oath, however, has been contextually deleted. The oath of the angels is probably apt on this occasion because they are all the time involved in the administration and running of the world. They are executing their duties loyally. On the Day of Judgement, all material causes will be severed. Unusual events will

occur and the angels will be involved in them.

Five characteristics of the angels are mentioned which are concerned with or related to the extraction of the soul at the time of death. The purport of the verses is to affirm that Resurrection is a certainty. It starts with human death. Every man's death is his partial Day of Doom, and this has an important impact on his belief in Resurrection. The five qualities are as follows:

The first quality of the angels:

النّٰزِعٰتِ غَرْقًا I swear by those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the infidels) vigorously.

This refers to the angels of punishment who draw the souls of the infidels vigorously and harshly. The words 'vigorously' refer to spiritual pain. The humans around the dying person may not be sensitive to the pain. Often it is noticed that the soul of an infidel apparently slips out easily, but this ease is perceived by humans around the dying man. The pain is felt by the soul of the dying person. Who can perceive it? We are aware of it only because Allah has informed us about it in this verse.

The second quality of the angels :

وَّالنّٰشِطٰتِ نَشْطًا (and by those [angels] who untie the knot [of the souls of the believers] smoothly, [2]' The word *nashiṭāt* is derived from *nashṭ* and it means 'to untie the knot'. This signifies 'to untie the knot of something which contains water or air, so that it may be released easily'. This is metaphor for drawing out the souls of the believers gently, unlike the souls of the infidels which are plucked out harshly. In this case too the adverb 'smoothly' refers to the spiritual smoothness, and not to the physical experience. Sometimes, it happens that there is a delay at the time of death of a righteous believer. This may not be suspected to mean that he is undergoing some sort of suffering, although physically it may seem so. When the soul of an infidel is extracted, the entire scene of the punishment of *barzahk* comes in front of him. It is frightened by it, disperses throughout the body and tries to hide or escape. The angels forcefully extract the soul just as wet wool wrapped around a skewer is forcefully removed. When the soul of a believer is extracted, on the other hand, the reward, the blessings and the welcome news of the *barzahk*

come in front of him.

The third quality of the angels :

وَّالسّٰبِحٰتِ سَبۡحًا (and by those who float [in the atmosphere] swiftly...79:3). The word *sabḥ* literally means to 'swim' or 'float'. Here it signifies 'to glide along swiftly as in the sea where there is no mountain barrier'. The one who swims fast and goes far in swimming or a boatman who moves directly towards his final destination. The 'angels who float swiftly' refer to the quality of the angels of death who extract human souls and take them quickly towards the sky.

The fourth quality of the angels :

فَالسّٰبِقٰتِ سَبۡقًا (then proceed forward quickly...79:4). According to Divine instruction, the angels do not delay in transporting the souls of people to their good or their bad abodes. The soul of a believer is transported to the atmosphere and blessings of Paradise, and that of an unbeliever to the atmosphere and torment of Hell.

The fifth quality of the angels :

فَالۡمُدَبِّرٰتِ اَمۡرًا (then manage [to do] everything [they are ordered to do,]...79:5). In other words, the last task of these angels of death will be as follows: Those who are commanded to reward and comfort the deserving souls, will gather means of reward and comfort for them; and those who are commanded to punish and cause pain to [the evil souls] will organise means for that.

Reward and Punishment in the Grave

The Sūrah thus far confirms that at the time of death, the angels will arrive and extract human souls. Then they will take them to the sky and swiftly transport them to their abodes, the good souls to the good abode and the bad souls to the bad one. There they will organise means of reward or punishment and pain or comfort for them. The verses show that the reward and punishment will take place in the grave or *barzakh*. Thereafter the reward and punishment will be meted out on the Day of Judgement. Authentic Traditions give elaborate details of this. There is a lengthy Tradition of Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib ؓ cited in Mishkāt-ul-Maṣābīḥ with reference to Musnad of Aḥmad.

Nafs [Self] Rūḥ [Spirit - Soul]: Qāḍī Thanā'ullah's Research and Analysis

The readers are referred to a special research and analysis by the Baihaqī of his time, Qāḍī Thanā'ullah Pānipatī, that was presented in this book under verse [29] of Sūrah Ḥijr. Here the learned commentator has added some more details which dispose of many doubts which arise from the above Tradition: The human soul is a refined body which permeates the dense material body. The [ancient] doctors and philosophers called it as *rūḥ* or soul. But the real spirit is an abstract substance and a subtle divine creature connected in a special way with this physical soul or *nafs*, the life of which is dependent on the Divine Spirit. The pure, abstract and non-material spirit is the life of the first soul on which depends the life of the body, and therefore it is called the 'soul of soul'. The real nature of the connection between these two kinds of soul is not known to anyone. It is known to Allah alone. Perhaps an illustration would clarify the matter. If we were to hold a mirror against the sun, then, despite that the sun is 149.6 million kilometres away from the earth, its reflection comes into the mirror. And because of the light, that too starts glowing like the sun. The same thing applies to the human soul. If it exerts itself in spiritual struggle and ascetic discipline in keeping with the teachings of [Divine] revelation, he will be enlightened. Otherwise he would be polluted with the bad effects of the physical body. This is the refined bodily soul that the angels transport to the heaven and transport him back with honours if he is enlightened. Otherwise the doors of the heaven are not opened for him and is thrown down from top. This is the refined bodily soul, the Tradition notes, which Allah created from dust and to it He will return him and from it. He resurrect him. It is this refined bodily soul that gets enlightened and becomes fragrant. But the same body can stink because of [the filth of] disbelief and idolatrous practices. The 'abstract spirit' is connected with the dense body through the refined bodily soul. The abstract spirit never dies. The reward or punishment of grave is experienced by the refined bodily soul which keeps connected with the grave whereas the abstract spirit remains in *'illiyyūn*, and it feels the effects of reward and punishment indirectly. Thus the statement that 'the soul is in the grave' is true in the sense that 'soul' in this context refers to the bodily soul. The statement that 'the soul is in *'Ālam-ul-arwāḥ* or *'illiyyūn'* is also true, because the 'soul' in this context refers to *rūḥ*

mujarrad or 'abstract spirit'. Thus it is possible to reconcile the apparently conflicting statements.

فَإِذَاهُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ (and in no time they will be [brought] in the plain [of *hashr*]...79:14). The word *sāhirah* refers to 'the surface of the earth'. When the earth will be re-created at Resurrection, it will be a completely level surface. There will be no mountain barriers, no buildings or caves. This is referred to as '*sāhirah*'.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be hurt by the stubbornness of the obdurate rejecters of Resurrection. The next verses recount the story of Mūsā عليه السلام and Fir'aun to console him, and to show that the adverse attitude of the pagans is not confined to him. The previous prophets have also faced similar situations, but they endured them with patience. The Holy Prophet ﷺ too should exercise patience and fortitude.

فَأَخَذَهُ اللّٰهُ نَكَالَ الْاٰخِرَةِ وَالْاُوْلٰى (So, Allah seized him for the deterrent punishment in the Hereafter and the present world....79:25). The word *nakāl* means an 'exemplary punishment' or 'an extremely severe punishment given to an offender to deter others against committing a similar offence or sin'. The phrase 'punishment of the '*ākhirah*' refers to the punishment of the Hereafter that will be meted out to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). The phrase 'punishment of the '*ūlā*' refers to the punishment meted out to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and his army in this world whereby they were destroyed by drowning.

Further, the Qur'ān again disposes of the doubt of the rejecters of resurrection who pose the question: "Are we going to be brought back to our former state (of life)? Is it when we will have turned into decayed bones?" [10-11] In other words, this is a negative rhetorical question. They purport to say that it is not possible for them to be restored to life after death when they have become perished and worm-eaten bones. Allah responds that the Supreme Creator, Who drew out this universe without any pre-existing matter and without any instrument, certainly has the Supreme power to give existence to things after destroying them. Why should it be a surprise?

In the verses that follow, the horrors of the Day of Judgement are depicted. It is mentioned that on that Day, every person will be presented with his deeds. Described also are the abodes of the inmates of Paradise

and Hell. Towards the end, special traits of the people of Paradise and those of Hell are portrayed by which a man can decide in this very world whether, according to the rules, his abode would be Paradise or Hell. The expression 'according to the rules' has been used because many verses and narratives indicate that there could be 'exceptions to the rules'. For example, a person might attain freedom from Hell and enter Paradise by virtue of intercession or directly through the grace of Allah. This is an exception to the rule. The general rule is the same as has been mentioned in these verses.

First, the special marks of the inmates of Hell are described. They have two characteristics:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى وَاٰثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا (then for the one who had rebelled, and preferred the worldly life [to the Hereafter]...79:38). In other words, [1] instead of remaining loyal to Allah and His Messenger and following their commands, they adopt the line of rejection and rebellion; and [2] prefer the life of this world to that of the Hereafter. In other words, if he were to do a deed that gives comfort and pleasure in this world but punishment in the Hereafter, he would prefer the comforts and pleasure of this life to the pleasure of the next life. Those who are characterised by these two qualities the Blazing Fire, that is Hell, will be their abode, thus: فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوٰى (the Hell will be the abode...79:39).

Thereafter, the special marks of the inmates of Paradise are described. They too have two characteristics:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى (whereas for the one who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained his self from the [evil] desire, 79:40). In other words, [1] the first characteristic of a God-fearing person is that, in this life, he shudders at the thought of appearing before Allah to account for his deeds on the Day of Reckoning; and [2] forbids the baser self from its evil desires. Those who are characterised by these two qualities have the good news that the Paradise will be their abode, thus: فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوٰى (the Paradise will be the abode....79:41)

Three Levels of Suppressing [the Base] Self

The verse under comment lays down two conditions of attaining the abode in Paradise, but carefully considered, the two conditions, in terms of consequence, are one. The first condition is the fear of accountability in

the presence of Allah. The second condition is to restrain oneself from the evil desires. As a matter of fact, fear of Allah causes one to restrain oneself from evil desires. Qāḍī Thanā'ullah Pānipatī has written in his Tafsīr Maẓharī that there are three levels of suppressing evil desires, as follows:

The first level is that one avoids false beliefs which are in conflict or incompatible with express texts [of the Holy Qur'ān and established Sunnah] and consensus of [the righteous] predecessors. In this level, a person deserves to be called 'Sunnī Muslim'.

The second level is the middle one. A person, in this stage, may think of committing sin. Then he may remember that he has to account for his deeds before Allah [on the Day of Reckoning]. As a result, he abandons the thought of committing sin. The complement to this level is that one abstains from doubtful things and those acts that are permissible in themselves, but there is apprehension that if committed, they may lead one to slip into impermissible acts. Sayyidnā Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr ﷺ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "He who abstained from doubtful things has protected his honour and religion. He who indulged in doubtful things will eventually indulge in forbidden things." The expression 'doubtful things' signifies those acts about which one is not certain whether they are permissible or not, both possibilities being equal. Let us consider a few examples: if a person is ill and can take [wet] ablution, but he is not sure whether taking [wet] ablution in this state would be harmful. Thus the permissibility of dry ablution (*tayammum*) becomes doubtful. Likewise a person is able to perform prayers in a standing position, but feels great difficulty. He is now in doubt whether or not it is permissible for him to perform prayers in a sitting position. On such occasions, one should abandon the doubtful thing or act, and prefer what is definitely certain. This is *taqwa* and the middle course of suppressing the selfish desires.

Tricks of the Base Self

There are acts whose sinful nature is obvious to every one. The selfish desires prompting to such sinful acts may be suppressed by one's deliberate efforts and firm resolution. However, there are evils prompted by one's base self even during his acts of worship and other good deeds, such as self-conceit, (*'Ujb*) vanity, (*Kibr*), and show off (*Riyā'*). These are such sins whose sinful nature is often not discoverable to a common

person, still they are very severe and firmly ingrained evil desires of one's base self. One is at times deceived by them, because he continues to think that his actions are right. It is extremely necessary that first and foremost this lower self must be suppressed. But this cannot be achieved by one on his own. It is necessary for one to search for a perfect spiritual master (*Ash-shaikhul-kāmil*), and hand himself over to him for guidance. He acts as the authentic guide and the only one to whom a seeker of Truth should turn in his quest and follow his advice. In turning to the spiritual master, the seeker is turning to Allah Almighty. The *shaikh* engages him in the spiritual struggle and endeavour [*mujāhadah*] against the passions and tendencies of the lower self [*'uyūb-un-nafs*].

Shaikh Imām Ya'qūb Karkhī رحمه الله تعالیٰ says that in his young age he was a carpenter. He found laziness, and felt darkness in his inner self. So, he intended to keep fasts for a few days so that he may get rid of the laziness and darkness. Co-incidentally, one day, while he was fasting, he went up to Shaikh Imām Bahā'uddīn Naqshbandī. The Shaikh called for meals for his guests. He was also invited to partake of the meal, and the Shaikh said: "He is a very bad slave who is the slave of his base self that misleads him. It is better to partake of meal than to keep fast with evil desires of the base self." Shaikh Karkhī says that at that moment he realised that (by fasting) he was falling prey to self-complacence, self-conceit and pride, which the Shaikh Naqshbandī perceived. On that occasion, Shaikh Karkhī realised that a spiritual master's permission and guidance is needed to take up an optional act of worship, because the spiritual master is aware of the hidden tricks of the evil desires of the base self. If an optional act of worship will be accompanied by such motives, the will put a stop to it [for remedial purposes]. He asked Shaikh Naqshbandī: "If I cannot find a Shaikh who is called in Ṣūfī terms as *fānī fillah* and *bāqī billah,* (the explanation is coming in the next paragraph.)what must I do?" He replied: "Recite *istighfār* abundantly and recite *istighfār* [seek Allah's pardon] twenty times regularly after every prayer, so that it works out to a hundred times reciting it five times a day." The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Sometimes I feel my heart disturbed, and I recite *istighfār* [seek Allah's pardon] a hundred times a day."

The third and the highest level of suppression of the base self is that

by abundant *dhikrullah* [remembrance of Allah] and constant *mujāhadah* [spiritual struggle and endeavour against the evil passions] and *riyāḍah* [ascetic discipline], one's self (*nafs*) is so much cleansed and purified that the desires that tempts him to evil are totally eliminated. This is the special stage of *wilāyah* [Divine friendship], which in Ṣūfī Terminology is called *fānī fillah* and *bāqī billah*. The Qur'ān says regarding such people [addressing the Satan]:

إِنَّ عِبَادِىْ لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ

> 'My servants are such that you have no power over them [15:42]'

The following Tradition applies to the same category of *walī*:

لَايُؤْمِنُ اَحَدُكُمْ حَتّٰى يَكُوْنَ هَوَاهُ تَبْعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهٖ

> 'None of you can be a [perfect] believer unless his [base] desires of self follow my teachings.'

Towards the end of the Sūrah, the Holy Qur'ān responds to the *mala fide* demand of the infidels that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should let them know the exact date and time of the Day of Judgement. They are told that knowledge of the time and date is within Allah's own special prerogative. Allah's consummate wisdom did not pass the information to any angel or Prophet عليهم السلام. Therefore, the demand is futile.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Nāzi'āt
Ends here

Sūrah 'Abas

(Frowning)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 42 verses and 1 section.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 42

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلّٰٓى ﴿١﴾ اَنْ جَآءَهُ الْاَعْمٰى ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا يُدْرِيْكَ لَعَلَّهٗ يَزَّكّٰٓى
﴿٣﴾ اَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرٰى ﴿٤﴾ اَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنٰى ﴿٥﴾ فَاَنْتَ لَهٗ
تَصَدّٰى ﴿٦﴾ وَ مَا عَلَيْكَ اَلَّا يَزَّكّٰى ﴿٧﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْ جَآءَكَ يَسْعٰى
﴿٨﴾ وَهُوَ يَخْشٰى ﴿٩﴾ فَاَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهّٰى ﴿١٠﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ ﴿١١﴾
فَمَنْ شَآءَ ذَكَرَهٗ ﴿١٢﴾ فِيْ صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾ مَّرْفُوْعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ
﴿١٤﴾ بِاَيْدِيْ سَفَرَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾ قُتِلَ الْاِنْسَانُ مَآ اَكْفَرَهٗ
﴿١٧﴾ مِنْ اَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهٗ ﴿١٨﴾ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهٗ فَقَدَّرَهٗ ﴿١٩﴾ ثُمَّ
السَّبِيْلَ يَسَّرَهٗ ﴿٢٠﴾ ثُمَّ اَمَاتَهٗ فَاَقْبَرَهٗ ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ اِذَا شَآءَ اَنْشَرَهٗ ﴿٢٢﴾
كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَآ اَمَرَهٗ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْاِنْسَانُ اِلٰى طَعَامِهٖٓ ﴿٢٤﴾
اَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَآءَ صَبًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْاَرْضَ شَقًّا ﴿٢٦﴾ فَاَنْبَتْنَا فِيْهَا
حَبًّا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَّعِنَبًا وَّقَضْبًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَّزَيْتُوْنًا وَّنَخْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَّحَدَآئِقَ غُلْبًا
﴿٣٠﴾ وَّ فَاكِهَةً وَّاَبًّا ﴿٣١﴾ مَّتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِاَنْعَامِكُمْ ﴿٣٢﴾ فَاِذَا جَآءَتِ
الصَّآخَّةُ ﴿٣٣﴾ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ اَخِيْهِ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَاُمِّهٖ وَاَبِيْهِ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ
﴿٣٧﴾ وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَوُجُوهٌ
يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ ﴿٤١﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَفَرَةُ
الْفَجَرَةُ ﴿٤٢﴾

He (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) frowned and turned his face, [1] because the blind man came to him! [2] And what could tell you (O Holy Prophet about the prospects of the blind man?) May be, (if you had attended him properly,) he would have attained purity, [3] or have taken to the advice, and the advice would have benefited him. [4] As for the one who does not care (about faith), [5] you are anxious to pursue him, [6] while there is no blame on you, if he does not attain purity. [7] As regards the one who has come to you rushing eagerly, [8] while he fears (Allah), [9] to him you pay no heed! [10]

Never! (you should never act in this way,) Indeed this (Qur'ān) is an advice. [11] So, whoever so wills, let him remember it. [12] It is (recorded) in those scripts (of the Preserved Tablet) that are honoured, [13] exalted, purified, [14] in the hands of those scribes [15] who are honourable, righteous. [16]

Death be unto the man! How ungrateful he is! [17] From which stuff did He (Allah) create him? [18] From a drop of semen! He created him, and designed him in due proportion, [19] then He made the way easy for him, [20] Later, he made him die, and put him into the grave, [21] thereafter, when He will intend, He will raise him up. [22] No! He has not yet fulfilled what He (Allah) had commanded him. [23]

So, let the man look to his food, [24] how well We poured water, [25] then how nicely We split the earth, [26] then We grew in it grain, [27] and grapes and greens, [28] and olive and date-palms, [29] and gardens, full of thick trees, [30] and fruits and fodder, [31] as a benefit for you and your cattle. [32]

So when there will come the Deafening Noise, [33] the Day when one will flee from his brother, [34] and from his mother and father, [35] and from his wife and sons, [36] every one of them will have enough concern to make

him careless of others. [37] **Many faces, on that day, will be bright,** [38] **laughing, rejoicing,** [39] **and many faces, on that day, will be stained with dust,** [40] **covered by darkness.** [41] **Those are the disbelievers, the nefarious.** [42]

Commentary

Circumstance of Revelation

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ, the companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a blind man. It once happened that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was engaged in a talk with the leaders of Quraish about some matters of belief. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ arrived there. Imam Baghawi adds that being blind and unable to see the surroundings, he did not realise that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was occupied with the others. He, therefore, burst into the circle and called the Holy Prophet ﷺ repeatedly. [Maẓharī]. According to Ibn Kathīr, he requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ to teach him a verse of the Qur'ān and insisted an immediate enlightenment on the question. On that occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was occupied with the non-believing leaders of Makkah in the hope that they would embrace the faith of Islam. The leaders to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ was speaking were 'Utbah Ibn Rabī'ah, Abū Jahl Ibn Hishām and the Holy Prophet's ﷺ uncle 'Abbās ؓ [who had until then not embraced the Islamic faith].

The Holy Prophet ﷺ disliked the intrusion, and showed his displeasure by turning aside from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm, thinking that he was a committed Muslim who frequently visited him, and therefore he could speak to him at another appropriate time. There was no religious loss in postponing the response to him. On the other hand, the Quraish leaders neither frequented the Holy Prophet's ﷺ company, nor could the Word of Allah be conveyed to them at any time. At that particular moment, they were listening to the Holy Prophet's ﷺ discourse and there was hope that they would embrace the Islamic faith. But if the conversation was rashly interrupted, apparently they would have been deprived of the faith. In view of this situation, the Holy Prophet ﷺ showed adverse reaction by turning aside from 'Abdullāh Ibn umm Maktūm ؓ, and continued his discourse with the Quraish leaders. When the assembly broke up, the verses of Sūrah 'Abas were revealed to record Allah's dislike for this attitude, and to give directions for future.

This attitude of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was based on *ijtihād* or 'an

opinion based on personal reasoning'. He thought that if a Muslim were to adopt a speech style that is not in keeping with etiquettes of a gathering, he needs to be reprimanded, so that in future he may be careful in future. That is the reason why Holy Prophet ﷺ turned his face away from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm رضي الله عنه. Secondly, disbelief (*kufr*) and polytheism (*shirk*) are the most severe sins, and an effort to eradicate them should take priority over the subsidiary precepts of Islam on which Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm رضي الله عنه asked for enlightenment. Allah Almighty, through this Surah, did not confirm the correctness of this *ijtihād* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and explained to him that educating a genuine seeker will most certainly benefit him, while the benefit of discussion with the opponents (who disdainfully turn away their face when the Holy Prophet ﷺ talks to them) is shaky and doubtful. Doubtful thing cannot be preferred over certainty. As for the violation of etiquette committed by Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktūm, its excuse is pointed out by the Holy Qur'ān in the word 'blind'. It is indicated by this word that being a blind man, he could not see what the Holy Prophet ﷺ was doing and with whom he was engaged in conversation. Thus he was excusable, and was not liable to be subjected to aversion. This indicates that if an excusable person were to break any rule of etiquette unwittingly, he should not be reprimanded.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلّٰى (He [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] frowned and turned his face, 80:1). The word *'abasa* means 'he frowned' and the word *tawallā* means 'he turned aside'. Since the reference here is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ who himself is addressed, the verbs should have been in the second person: 'you frowned and you turned aside'. But the Holy Qur'ān on this occasion uses the third person in order to maintain the honour of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as if this attitude were shown by some other person, and in a subtle way it alludes to the point that what the Holy Prophet ﷺ did was not befitting his high status. Then the next sentence وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ (and what could tell you? ...80:3) alludes to the fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was excusable, because it did not come to his attention that the Companion is asking something whose effect will be certain and the effect of conversation with others is dubious. The second sentence abandons the third person, and switches to the second person in order to maintain the

honour of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Had he not been addressed in second person at all, it might have created the impression that he is not addressed directly because of his unapproved conduct, which would have been an unbearable pain and grief for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Just as the third person in the first statement is meant to show respect to him, the second person in the following sentence is also meant to honor and console him.

لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكّٰى أَوْيَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنفَعَهُ الذِّكْرٰى (May be, [if you had attended him properly,] he would have attained purity, or have taken to the advice, and the advice would have benefited him....80:4).

In other words, because Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm رضي الله عنه was a genuine believer, any advice given to him would have benefited him and served to purify him. The companion sought enlightenment and its benefit was certain. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ enlightened him on the topic, he would have purified himself and attained perfection. If that did not happen, he would have at least attained the basic benefit of Divine remembrance. He would have improved the love and fear of Allah in his heart. The word *dhikrā* means 'to remember Allah abundantly' [Ṣiḥāḥ].(1)

On this occasion, the Qur'ān has used two sentences *yazzakkā* and *yazzakkaru*. The first statement signifies 'to be purified' and the second statement signifies 'he may take heed and the reminder may benefit him'. The first stage is that of the 'righteous' who cleanse their inner and outer selves. The second stage is that of *mubtadī* 'beginners on the spiritual journey'. At this stage, the beginner is reminded of Allah which enhances the greatness and awe of Allah in his heart. The two sentences are disjoined by disjunctive particles *au* (or) and technically they are not necessarily exclusive to one another. The sense is that 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm رضي الله عنه would have attained either both benefits, or at least, the second one, that is, increase in Allah's remembrance and in His awe, which is the initial step towards perfection [Maẓharī]

An Important Qur'ānic Principle of Teaching and Preaching

On this occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was faced with two different

(1) This interpretation is based on taking the word '*dhikrā*' in the sense of rememberance of Allah'. However, some other exegetes have taken this word to mean 'advice', and the translation of the text, as well as the explanation following in the next paragraph, is based on it. (Muḥammad Taqi Usmānī)

requirements at the same time. On the one hand, he was required to teach a Muslim and to encourage him on attaining perfection. On the other hand, he had to provide guidance to non-Muslims. The principle laid down here makes it clear that the first requirement takes priority over the second one. It is improper to delay the first task (educating Muslims) because of the second task. This indicates that education of Muslims and their reform are more important than, and take priority over, getting the non-Muslims to embrace the faith.

Scholars should avoid any such indulgence when disposing of any doubts of the non-Muslims, which may create doubts or complaints in the minds of the general body of Muslims. The teachers, preachers and reformers need to keep in mind these Qur'anic guidelines to maintain the welfare and priority of the Muslims. How beautifully Akbar Allahabadi, the Urdu poet, versifies this principle:

بے وفا سمجھیں تمہیں اہل حرم اس سے بچو...... دَیر والے کج ادا کہہ دیں یہ بدنامی بھلی

> 'Protect yourselves from a position where people of the Ḥaram (Muslims) call you unfaithful.
>
> As opposed to this, if People of temple [non-Muslims] call you 'ill-mannered', (because of your faithfulness to your religion), this dishonor is better.

The following verses clarify the principles more elaborately:

اَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنٰى فَاَنْتَ لَهٗ تَصَدّٰى (As for the one who does not care [about faith], you are anxious to pursue him!...80:6).

In other words: 'Those who turn away from you and your religion, you are pursuing them under the hope that some how they should become Muslims, while this is not your responsibility. If they do not embrace the faith, there will be no blame on you.

Thereafter, in verses 13 and 14, Allah Almighty has described the high status of the Holy Qur'ān, thus:

فِیْ صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ. مَّرْفُوْعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ (It is [recorded] in those scripts [of the Preserved Tablet] that are honoured, [13] exalted, purified - 14).

The word *ṣuḥuf* refers to *lauḥ maḥfūẓ* 'the Preserved Tablet'.

Although it is a single thing, but *ṣuḥuf,* the plural form of *ṣaḥīfah* is used because all divine scriptures are written in it, or because the angels copy their scriptures from them. The word *marfū'ah* means 'exalted in the sight of Allah'. The word *muṭahharah* (purified) means 'people in the state of sexual defilement, menstrual discharge, post-natal bleeding and people in the state of minor uncleanness are not permitted to touch it'.

بِأَيْدِى سَفَرَةٍ. كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ (in the hands of those scribes who are honourable, righteous. [80:15-16])

The word *safarah,* with *fatḥah* [=a+a] on the first two letters, may be the plural of *safir* which means a 'scribe'. In this case, it would refer to the recording angels, or to the Prophets عليهم السلام and those of their aides who write down the revelation. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid hold this view.

The word *safarah* may be used as the plural of *safīr* in the sense of 'envoy'. In this case, it would refer to the angels who convey the revelation, and Prophets عليهم السلام and their companions who write the revelation. The *'ulama'* (knowledgeable persons) of the Muslim community' are also included in this term, because they too are envoys between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Muslim community. The messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that he who recites the Qur'ān and is an expert in the art of recitation, he will be with the honorable, righteous envoys. He who is not an expert in the art of recitation, but recites it correctly with difficulty, he shall receive double reward.[Transmitted by Shaikhain from 'Ā'ishah - Maẓharī]. This shows that a non-expert will receive double reward - one for recitation of Qur'ān, and the other for bearing the difficulty. This also indicates that an expert will receive countless rewards. [Maẓharī]

The preceding verses mentioned that the Qur'ān is exalted and that belief in it is incumbent. Subsequently, the rejecters of Qur'ān are cursed and they are warned against showing ingratitude towards Divine favours. That the Holy Qur'ān is a great Divine blessing is understood only by the men of Divine knowledge and understanding. Further, there is the mention of those Divine favours that Allah confers on man since his inception to the end of his life. These are material and physical things

that a man with basic intellect can understand. Human creation is mentioned, thus:

مِنْ اَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهٗ. مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ (From which stuff did He [Allah] create him? From a drop of semen! ..80:18-19).

First a question is raised: 'O man! Consider what Allah has created you from?' Since its reply is so obvious that there can be no other reply, the next verse itself says: 'From a drop of semen!' Thus the verse draws pointed attention to the very humble beginning of man, so that it may be brought home to him that Allah having created him from such an insignificant thing as a sperm-drop, created him and proportioned him:

'خَلَقَهٗ فَقَدَّرَهٗ' (He created him, and designed him in due proportion..80:19). In other words, He has made him with a special design and with great wisdom. His stature, body-structure, his face, his length and breadth of the limbs, his joints, his eyes, nose and ears are all well-proportioned in their creation. If any limb or organ loses its proportion, man's face will go awry, and every activity will become a problem.

The word *qaddara* is derived from *taqdīr* which is also used in the sense of 'predestination'. Taking the word in this sense, the verse may also mean here that when man is under creation in his mother's womb, Allah predetermines four things for him: his life span, his sustenance, his deeds and whether he would be miserable or happy [as in the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ recorded by Shaikhain].

'ثُمَّ السَّبِيْلَ يَسَّرَهٗ' (then He made the way easy for him...80:20) Allah through His consummate wisdom creates man in his mother's womb, creation after creation, within three layers of darkness [i.e. the belly, the womb and the amniotic membrane]. It is kept in a safe place in the belly. The mother in whose belly all this is happening is totally unaware of any of the details of this process. Thereafter, when the baby becomes perfect with all its limbs and organs, Allah made it possible that a body weighing 3 to 4 kg comes out through an extremely narrow passage, and the mother does not suffer unduly. So blessed be He Who is the best Creator!

'ثُمَّ اَمَاتَهٗ فَاَقْبَرَهٗ' (Later, he made him die, and put him into the grave..80:21) After mentioning the inception of human life, Allah points to its end, that is, death and grave. Death has been mentioned here in the context of

blessings of Allah. It indicates that death is a blessing rather than a calamity. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have put it thus: تحفة المومن الموت "The gift of a believer is death." Moreover, there is a profound wisdom in death at macro level for the entire world.

The phrase 'فَاَقْبَرَهٗ *fa-aqbarah* (and put him into the grave) describes another blessing of Allah, in that when man is dead, he is not left lying on the earth like other animals where he might rot, blow up and burst [and probably be ravaged by vultures or beasts]. But, even after death, he is honoured in the most befitting manner. His body is washed ceremonially, enshrouded in clean cloths, and buried in a grave with respect.

This verse also indicates that it is obligatory to bury a dead human body.

'كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَآ اَمَرَهٗ' (No! He has not yet fulfilled what He [Allah] had commanded him...80:23).

Having mentioned in the preceding verses the beginning and the end of human life, Divine Omnipotence and Divine blessings, the current verses warn the non-believing man that the demand of Divine Signs and blessings was to carefully ponder and believe in Allah, and comply with His injunctions, but the unfortunate creature failed to do so. Further, the Divine favours are mentioned that were conferred on man between the beginning and end of his life. Man is then asked to consider the sources of his food. Allah showers down water abundantly from the clouds. He cleaves the earth with new growth. Thereupon He causes grain to grow out of it. At first, a fragile shoot germinates and sprouts. Then many different kinds of grain, fruits and gardens come into existence. Having warned man several times about these Divine blessings, the Sūrah concludes with the mention of Resurrection, thus:

فَاِذَا جَآءَتِ الصَّآخَّةُ (So when there will come the Deafening Noise..80:33). The word *ṣākhkhah* means 'deafening cry or shout' and it refers to the blowing of the trumpet, which will be a deafening sound.

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ اَخِيْهِ (the Day when one will flee from his brother..80:34). This depicts the scene when all the people will have gathered in the Plain of Gathering. Each person will be worried about himself, and the

situation will be so horrifying and tense that it will make people heedless of anything around them. In the world, there are relationships between people that make one willing to lay down his life for the other, but on the Day of Resurrection there will be such horror and chaos that they will be unable to take care of anyone. In fact, even if one sees the other in front of him, he will turn away from him. They will try to flee from their brothers, from their mothers and fathers, from their spouses and their children. They will not be able to help any of them in the Hereafter, despite the natural attachment they had with them in the world. Normally, one is more anxious in this world about his parents than about his brothers, and he is more anxious about his wife and children than about his parents. Keeping this in view, the relationships, in the present verse, are arranged from lower order to higher order.

The Chapter ends on a note of warning to disbelievers that if they reject the Qur'ānic message and persist in opposition to the Holy Prophet ﷺ they will have to face a day of reckoning when misery, shame and ignominy will be their lot. The righteous believers, however, will reside in Gardens of Bliss, their faces beaming with joy and happiness.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah 'Abas
Ends here

Sūrah At-Takwīr
(The Folding)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 29 verses and one sections

بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 29

اِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَاِذَا النُّجُوْمُ انْكَدَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَاِذَا الْجِبَالُ
سُيِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَ اِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ﴿٤﴾ وَاِذَا الْوُحُوْشُ حُشِرَتْ
﴿٥﴾ وَاِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ﴿٦﴾ وَاِذَا النُّفُوْسُ زُوِّجَتْ ﴿٧﴾ وَاِذَا
الْمَوْءٗدَةُ سُئِلَتْ ﴿٨﴾ بِاَىِّ ذَنْۢبٍ قُتِلَتْ ﴿٩﴾ وَاِذَا الصُّحُفُ
نُشِرَتْ ﴿١٠﴾ وَاِذَا السَّمَآءُ كُشِطَتْ ﴿١١﴾ وَاِذَا الْجَحِيْمُ سُعِّرَتْ
﴿١٢﴾ وَ اِذَا الْجَنَّةُ اُزْلِفَتْ ﴿١٣﴾ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّآ اَحْضَرَتْ ﴿١٤﴾
فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَّسِ ﴿١٥﴾ الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا عَسْعَسَ
﴿١٧﴾ وَالصُّبْحِ اِذَا تَنَفَّسَ ﴿١٨﴾ اِنَّهٗ لَقَوْلُ رَسُوْلٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿١٩﴾ ذِىْ قُوَّةٍ
عِنْدَ ذِى الْعَرْشِ مَكِيْنٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ مُّطَاعٍ ثَمَّ اَمِيْنٍ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ
بِمَجْنُوْنٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ بِالْاُفُقِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَ مَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ
بِضَنِيْنٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطٰنٍ رَّجِيْمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَاَيْنَ تَذْهَبُوْنَ
﴿٢٦﴾ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لِمَنْ شَآءَ مِنْكُمْ اَنْ يَّسْتَقِيْمَ
﴿٢٨﴾ وَمَا تَشَآءُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾

When the sun will be folded up, [1] and when the stars will swoop down, [2] and when the mountains will be set in motion, [3] and when the ten-months pregnant she-camels will be abandoned, [4] and when the wild beasts will be gathered together, [5] and when the seas will be flared up, [6] and when the people will be arranged in categories, [7] and when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked, [8] for what sin she was killed, [9] and when the scrolls (of deeds) will be unrolled, [10] and when the sky will be stripped off, [11] and when the Hell will be set ablaze, [12] and when the Paradise will be brought close, [13] then everyone will know what he (or she) has put forward, [14]

So, I swear by those (stars) that recede, [15] that proceed, that withdraw from the scene, [16] and by the night when it departs, [17] and the morning when it starts breathing, [18] it (the Qur'ān) is surely the word of a noble messenger (Jibra'īl عليه السلام), [19] the one possessing power, and a high status with the Lord of the Throne, [20] the one obeyed there, trusted. [21] And your companion (Muhammad ﷺ) is not a madman. [22] And he did see him (Jibra'īl عليه السلام) on the clear horizon. [23] And he (the Prophet ﷺ) is not stingy about (the news of) the unseen. [24] Nor is it the word of an outcast satan (devil). [25] Then where are you going? [26] It is nothing else but a message of advice for all the worlds, [27] for the benefit of any one from among you who intends to go straight. [28] And you cannot intend (to do anything) unless it is so intended by Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. [29]

Commentary

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ (When the sun will be folded up...81:1) The word *kawwara* is derived from Takwīr which denotes for the sun 'to lose its light'.[1] Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى has attached this interpretation to it. Another sense of the word is 'to cause to fall'. Rabī' Ibn Khaitham assigns the following interpretation to this verse: The Sun will be thrown into the ocean, and as a result of its heat the entire ocean will turn into fire. The two interpretations are not contradictory. They may be reconciled thus: first, its light will be put off and then it may be thrown

(1) Another meaning of Takwīr is 'to fold', and the translation in the text is based on this meaning. The sense of folding the sun is that its function will come to an end, and it will lose its light. As such, it comes to mean same thing as mentioned in first interpretation. Muhammad Taqi Usmani

into the ocean. Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records from Sayyidnā Abū Huharirah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that on the Day of Resurrection the Sun and the Moon would be thrown into the ocean. Musnad of Bazzār has the addition that they will be thrown into Hell. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Abid-Dunyā and Abush-Shaikh stated that on the Day of Resurrection Allah will throw the Sun, the Moon and all stars into the ocean. Then a violent wind will blow over them, as a result of which the entire ocean will turn into fire. Thus it is correct to say that the Sun and the Moon will be put into the ocean. It is likewise correct to say that they will be put into Hell, because the entire ocean at that time will have been turned into Hell. [Derived from Maẓharī and Qurṭubī]

وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ (and when the stars will swoop down...81:2). The word *inkadarat* is derived from *inkidār* and it denotes 'to fall'. The righteous predecessors have interpreted it thus. It signifies that all the stars from the sky will fall into the oceans as explained in the preceding verses.

وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ (and when the ten-months pregnant she-camels will be abandoned...81:4). The Arabic word *'ishār* is the plural of the word *'usharā'* and is applied to she-camels having ten months pregnancy. Such she-camels were considered by the Arabs to be a very valuable asset, because they expected her to give birth to more camels and abundant milk. As such, they used to protect her and never left her free. The verse referring to this custom of the Arabs, who were the immediate addressees, depicts the horrible scene of the Doomsday when even the most favorite wealth, like such a she-camel, will be abandoned and neglected by its owners because of the calamity they will be facing.

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ (and when the seas will be flared up...81:6). The word *sujjirat* is derived from *tasjīr* and it signifies 'to set ablaze'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ assigns this interpretation to the word in this context. Another sense of the word is 'to fill' and a third sense of the word is 'to mix or admix'. Some commentators have interpreted it in this sense. None of these interpretations is contradictory to each other. First, the salt and sweet water are admixed and the rivers are made to flow forth into the sea; then the seas will meet together and become one and having more water; then the seas will be set on fire; and then the Sun and the Moon and the stars will be thrown into the water. Then all the water will be turned into fire which will become part of Hell. [Maẓharī]

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ (and when the people will be arranged in categories...81:7). It means that the people on the Plain of Gathering will be grouped, like with like, in terms of belief and deeds. Disbelievers will be grouped together and believers will be grouped together. There are differences between the deeds and habits of believers and there are differences between the deeds and habits of disbelievers. The non-believers will be re-grouped according to their essential characteristics and the Muslims too will be re-grouped according to their essential characteristics as is reported in Baihaqī on the authority of Sayyidnā Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr ﷺ that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ said that the people doing similar deeds, good or bad, will be joined together. For example, the knowledgeable persons from among the Muslims who were serving Islamic studies will be made into one group; the people who devoted themselves for worship will be made into another group; the people performing *jihād* will be together, and the people whose main characteristic was to spend in charities will be gathered in one place. On the other hand, those who were involved in wicked activities like thieves, robbers, adulterers will also be assembled in their respective groups. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ based this statement on the verse of the Holy Qur'ān in which Allah says in Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah: وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلٰثَةً [and you will be (divided into) three categories. (56:7) It is mentioned further in that Sūrah that out of the three categories, two will attain salvation who are named as the 'foremost' and 'people of the right' while another group, namely the 'people of the left' will be comprised of the infidels.

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُدَةُ سُئِلَتْ (and when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked, for what sin she was killed...81:8-9) The word *mau'ūdah* is the girl-child buried alive. It was a common practice in pre-Islamic time of ignorance that people would take the birth of a girl as a matter of shame for their fathers, and therefore they would bury them alive as soon as they were born. Islam has abolished this barbaric practice completely. This verse, while depicting the scene of Resurrection, mentions that the girls who were buried alive will be questioned for what crime they were killed. Apparently, it seems that the question will be posed to the girl herself. This will give the victim an opportunity to prove her complete innocence and thus the perpetrators of this crime will be hauled up in the Divine Court of Justice, and will be duly punished for their wrongdoing.

It is also possible that the question will be posed to the killers of the girls why they committed infanticide.

Important Note

In any case, one question may arise here: The day referred to in these verses is named as the 'Day of of Requital' and the 'Day of Judgement'. This name itself sows that every person, on that day, will be put to a trial where he will be asked all sorts of questions about his deeds. Why has the Holy Qur'ān, at this place, singled out only the question asked about the girl that was buried alive. Carefully considered, it would appear that such a girl was the victim of the barbarism of her own parents. As such, there was no one to raise a plaint against such a brutal act, and to demand retaliation, especially when she was buried secretly with no evidence left. The verse, therefore, signifies that on the Day of Reckoning, even those criminals will be exposed and hauled up in the Divine Court of Justice against whom there was no evidence, nor was there anyone who could stand up on their behalf to demand justice. Allah knows best!

Abortion After Four Months is Tantamount to Infanticide

Ruling [1]

Burying alive infants or killing them is a major sin and a heinous brutality. Aborting a foetus after four months falls under the same category in Sharī'ah, because within four months the foetus receives the soul and treated as a living human being. Likewise, if a person strikes on the stomach of a pregnant woman which causes the baby to abort, then, according to the common consent of the Muslim jurists, it would be incumbent upon him to set free a slave or pay its price in blood-wit or *diyah*. If the baby was alive at the time of aborting and then died, full *diyah* will be incumbent. Abortion before four months is also unlawful, except in cases of necessity, but compared to the first case, it is a sin of lesser degree, because it does not amount to killing of a living human being clearly.

Ruling [2]: Birth Control

Birth control, whose many forms are invented today, is also termed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ as 'hidden infanticide' in a *ḥadīth* reported by Muslim from *Judhāmah* bint Wahb رضي الله عنها. There are, however, some ahadith in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have allowed *'azl* (coitus interruptus) or to have observed silence when asked about it,

which is a sign of permissibility of such an act. But it should be remembered that its permissibility is restricted to genuine needs, and that too in a way that productivity of the woman is not permanently blocked. [Maẓharī]. The present-day medical science has invented some measures that prevent pregnancy forever. The Sharī'ah does not permit such measures under any circumstances. Allah knows best!

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ (and when the sky will be stripped off...81:11) The word *kushiṭat* is derived from *kashṭ*, and it literally means 'to strip off' the skin of an animal. Probably, this condition will prevail at the first blowing of the Horn, which will happen in this world. The stars, the Sun and the Moon that contributed to the beauty of the sky will all lose their light and lustre and will be thrown into the ocean. The outlook of the sky will be changed. This phenomenon is termed in this verse as: 'The sky will be stripped off'. Some commentators interpret the word *kashṭ* in the sense of 'folding up'. The verse, according to them, purports to say that the sky that surrounds the upper atmosphere over our heads will be folded up.

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ (then everyone will know what he [or she] has put forward...81:14). It means that when Resurrection, with all the horrors mentioned above, will take place, man will realise what he has brought with him. The word 'what' here refers to his good and bad deeds, all of which will be in front of him, either in the form of the Record of Deeds that will be given in his hands or his deeds will assume a specific body shape as is understood from certain Traditions. Allah knows best!

Having described the horrors of Resurrection, and the accountability of deeds, Allah swears an oath by a few stars to confirms that the Qur'ān is the truth that has been sent down, fully protected from any interruption or distortion, and that the Prophet ﷺ who has received it is a great personality, and the angel (Jibra'īl ﷺ) who descended with it was known to him before hand. Therefore, there can be no room for any doubt about its veracity. The verses here swear an oath by five stars which the ancient Greeks called *khamsah mutaḥayyirah* or 'the five wandering stars ', since they seemed to stray irregularly across the sky. At times they are seen moving from East to West, and at others, from West to East. Different reasons have been assigned to their irregular movements. The ancient Greeks hold several contradictory explanations for this. The research of modern scientists concurs with some of the ancient

philosophers, and differs from some others. The Creator alone knows the truth and reality. The scientists merely guess and conjecture which may be wrong. The Qur'ān has, therefore, not involved its readers in such a useless debate. Allah showed us what was beneficial, that is, to observe the Divine Omnipotence, His Consummate Wisdom and to repose our faith in Him.

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُوْلٍ كَرِيْمٍ. ذِىْ قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِى الْعَرْشِ مَكِيْنٍ (it [the Qur'ān] is surely the word of a noble messenger [Jibra'īl], the one possessing power and a high status with the Lord of the Throne...81:19-20). This is the subject of oath that affirms that Qur'ān is the word brought by a noble messenger. Then three qualities are attributed to this noble messenger. The first quality is that he possesses power. The second quality is that he has high status and lofty rank with Allah, and he is obeyed in the upper realm. The third quality is that he is trusted, and there is no possibility of his committing any breach of trust or tampering with the message he conveys. The word 'noble messenger' obviously refers to the angel Jibra'īl عليه السلام, because the word 'messenger' is used for angels as it is used for prophets, and all the three qualities attributed to the 'messenger' in the next verses are truly present in Jibra'īl عليه السلام. His being powerful is mentioned in Sūrah An-Najm in the following words;

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيْدُ الْقُوٰى

It is taught to him by one (angel) of strong faculties.[53:5)

It is established through the *ḥadīth* of Mi'rāj that he is obeyed by other angels, because when he accompanied the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the sky and ordered the angels appointed on its doors to open them he was obeyed by them. That he is trust-worthy is too obvious to need a proof.

Some commentators, however, take the phrase 'honourable messenger' to refer to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and accordingly have made an attempt to take all the three qualities referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In the next verses, the Holy Qur'ān has mentioned the high status of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and has refuted the silly objections raised against him by the infidels.

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُوْنٍ (And your companion [Muḥammad ﷺ] is not a

madman....81:22) This is rebuttal to the foolish criticism of the enemies who said that Muḥammad ﷺ is [God forbid!] insane.

وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ بِالْاُفُقِ الْمُبِيْنِ (And he did see him [Jibra'īl عليه السلام] on the clear horizon. ...81:23) In other words, Muḥammad saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام on a clear horizon. A similar statement occurs in Sūrah An-Najm as follows:

وَهُوَ بِالْاُفُقِ الْاَعْلٰى

while he was on the upper horizon....53:7)

The purpose of mentioning this is to show that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was well-acquainted with Jibra'īl عليه السلام, the angel of revelation. He had seen him in his original shape. Therefore, there can be no room for doubt in the veracity of revelation he brings to him.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Takwīr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Infiṭār
(Cleaving)

This Sūrah is Makkī. and it has 19 verses.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 19

إِذَا السَّمَآءُ انفَطَرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انتَثَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ
فُجِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ ﴿٤﴾ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ
﴿٥﴾ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا الْإِنسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّىٰكَ
فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾ فِيٓ أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَآءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴿٨﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ
بِالدِّينِ ﴿٩﴾ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَٰفِظِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ كِرَامًا كَٰتِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾ يَعْلَمُونَ
مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ
﴿١٤﴾ يَصْلَوْنَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَآئِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَآ
أَدْرَىٰكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ مَآ أَدْرَىٰكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿١٨﴾ يَوْمَ لَا
تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْـًٔا ۖ وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلَّهِ ﴿١٩﴾

**When the sky will be cleft asunder, [1] and when the stars
will disperse, [2] and when the seas will be burst forth, [3]
and when the graves will be overturned, [4] then one will
know what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [5] O
man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord, [6]
who created you, then perfected you, then brought you in
due proportion? [7] He composed you in whichever form
He willed. [8] Never! (i.e. one should never be heedless**

towards him.) But you deny the Requital, [9] while (appointed) over you there are watchers, [10] who are noble, writers (of the deeds), [11] who know whatever you do. [12] Surely the righteous will be in bliss, [13] and surely the sinners will be in Hell, [14] in which they will enter on the Day of Requital, [15] and they will not (be able to) keep away from it. [16] And what may let you know what the Day of Requital is? [17] Again, what may let you know what the Day of Requital is? [18] A Day when no one will have power to do any thing for another! And all matters, on that Day, will belong to Allah (alone). [19]

Commentary

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَاَخَّرَتْ (...then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind....82:5) In the preceding verses [1-4] of the Sūrah, Allah depicts the scene of the Day of Judgement that when the sky splits, the stars fall, the seas are poured forth [ie the fresh and salt water bodies will merge to form one mass of water] and the graves are overturned [ie corpses will emerge from their graves], every soul shall come to know what it had sent ahead and what it had left behind. The phrase 'what he sent ahead' means the good or evil act which he has done in his life; and the phrase 'what he left behind' means what he failed to do or refrained from doing. It is also possible that 'what he sent ahead' refers to the acts he has done himself, and 'what he left behind' refers to the acts one has not done himself, but he has laid down a custom in the society. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "If anyone establishes a good tradition in Islam, he will have a reward for it and the equivalent of the rewards of those who act upon it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect; but he who establishes a bad custom in Islam will bear the responsibility of it and the responsibility of those who act upon it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect." This subject was dealt with earlier under the following verse: يُنَبَّؤُ الْإِنسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَاَخَّرَ 'Man will be informed of what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [53:13]'

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْإِنسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ (O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord...82:6) The opening of the Sūrah mentions the violent events that will take place at the end of this worldly life, and the current set of verses reminds us of the inceptive stages of our creation. The sum total of the verses purport to say that if man had considered carefully, he would have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and he would not have deviated a

hair's breadth from Divine injunctions, but he slumped into heedlessness and forgetfulness. In the present verse, he is reprimanded by a rhetorical question and by means of gentle remonstrance as to what has lured him away from His Gracious Lord, and led him to disobedience, despite he knows his beginning, and he knows his end.

The verse further goes on to remind man of the inceptive stages of his creation. First, it says: خَلَقَكَ فَسَوّٰىكَ (who created you, then perfected you, ...82:7). The sense is that not only did Allah create man, but He also perfected his creation and proportioned his body, limbs and organs. Every limb and organ is well placed. The body, height, length and breadth of every limb are kept in harmony, symmetry and balance. Any deviation from the symmetrical construction of the human body, the organs will become dysfunctional. Then the verse says: فَعَدَلَكَ (...then brought you in due proportion?...82:7). Man is granted such symmetry, harmony and balance that no other animal in the world is granted to that degree. Along with physical and physiological symmetry and harmony, he has been granted well-balanced disposition, despite the fact that man is made up of opposing humours - blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. Some are hot and others are cold, and yet the perfect wisdom of Allah prepared a well-balanced disposition. Thereafter a third characteristic is mentioned as follows:

فِيْٓ اَيِّ صُوْرَةٍ مَّاشَآءَ رَكَّبَكَ (He composed you in whichever form He willed....82:8). This is to indicate that since the basic structure of all human beings is the same, it was expected that the zillions of members of the human society would have shared the same shape, size and features, but the perfect mastery and the wonderful acumen of the Supreme Creator has created them so differently that each one of them has its own unique features that make him clearly distinct from all others, and no one is confused with another.

Having stated the creative acumen of the Great Creator, the verse states: يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْاِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيْمِ (O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord,...82:6). Allah has endowed man with such natural faculties and abilities that every limb and every joint of his body was enough to remind him of His Creator, and to make him obedient. But he is lured away from his gracious Lord, has forgotten Him and disobeyed Him. The question is: How did he forget his Lord, how did he become

heedless of Him, and how is he lured away from his Lord? On this occasion, the adjective *karīm* (Gracious) used for the 'Lord' points to the answer. The reason for such an ungrateful attitude is that Allah is Gracious and does not punish man immediately after his committing a sin. Rather, his sustenance, welfare and well-being, and worldly comforts [and pleasures] are not curtailed. He misinterprets Allah's magnanimity, and thus falls into deception. If man were to think rationally, he would adopt a grateful attitude and obedient behaviour, rather than adopting an ungrateful attitude and impudent behaviour. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالیٰ says:

كم منْ مغرور تحت السّتر وهو لا يشعر

> 'How many humans are there whose faults are put [by Allah] under cover, (i.e. He did not disgrace them), yet they do not appreciate (and are deluded by His grace.'

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ (Surely the righteous will be in bliss, and surely the sinners will be in Hell,...82:13-14) These two statements are connected with verse [5] above: عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ 'then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [5]'

The verse informs us that each person, on the Day of Reckoning, will know what he has done, and what will be the consequences of his deeds. The present verse says that the righteous will be in perfect bliss, while the sinners will be in a Blazing Fire of Hell.

وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ (and they will not [be able to] keep away from it...82:16) The inmates of Hell will never be able to get away from it, because the torment will be eternal, as the concluding verse of the Surah asserts: يوم لَاتَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا (A Day when no one [with his own free will in the Plain of Gathering] will have power to do any thing for another!). This does not negate intercession, because that will not happen with one's own free will, unless Allah grants permission to someone to intercede on someone's behalf, and then accepts the intercession. And all matters, on that Day, will belong to Allah (alone). [19]' Allah knows best!

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Infiṭār
Ends here

Sūrah At-Taṭfīf

(Curtailing the Rights)

Sūrah At-Taṭfīf was revealed in Makkah It has 36 Verses and 1 Section.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 36

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِيْنَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اِذَا اكْتَالُوْا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾
وَاِذَا كَالُوْهُمْ اَوْ وَّزَنُوْهُمْ يُخْسِرُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اَلَا يَظُنُّ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَنَّهُمْ
مَّبْعُوْثُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٥﴾ يَّوْمَ يَقُوْمُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾
كَلَّا اِنَّ كِتٰبَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِيْ سِجِّيْنٍ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَاسِجِّيْنٌ ﴿٨﴾
كِتٰبٌ مَّرْقُوْمٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُكَذِّبُوْنَ
بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا يُكَذِّبُ بِهٖٓ اِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿١٢﴾ اِذَا تُتْلٰى
عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتُنَا قَالَ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ
مَّاكَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَّبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمَحْجُوْبُوْنَ
﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ
تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّ كِتٰبَ الْاَبْرَارِ لَفِيْ عِلِّيِّيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ
مَاعِلِّيُّوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ كِتٰبٌ مَّرْقُوْمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يَّشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ اِنَّ
الْاَبْرَارَ لَفِيْ نَعِيْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ تَعْرِفُ فِيْ

وُجُوْهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٢٤﴾ يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَّحِيْقٍ مَّخْتُوْمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾
خِتٰمُهٗ مِسْكٌ ۭ وَفِيْ ذٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنٰفِسُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمِزَاجُهٗ مِنْ
تَسْنِيْمٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ عَيْنًا يَّشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اَجْرَمُوْا
كَانُوْا مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَاِذَا مَرُّوْا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُوْنَ
﴿٣٠﴾ وَاِذَا انْقَلَبُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهِمُ انْقَلَبُوْا فَكِهِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَ اِذَا رَاَوْهُمْ
قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ لَضَاۗلُّوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَآ اُرْسِلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ حٰفِظِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾
فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ عَلَى الْاَرَاۗئِكِ ۙ
يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ هَلْ ثُوِّبَ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوْا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾

Woe to the curtailers [1] who, when they measure something to receive from people, take it in full, [2] and when they measure or weigh something to give it to them, give less than due. [3] Do they not think that they have to be raised up [4] on a Great Day, [5] the Day when all the people will stand before the Lord of the worlds? [6] Never! (i.e. they should never forget that Day.) Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [7] And what may let you know what *sijjīn* is? [8] A register, inscribed! [9] Woe that day to the deniers, [10] who deny the Day of Requital! [11] And none denies it but every sinful transgressor. [12] When Our verses are recited to him, he says, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13] No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [14] No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day. [15] Then they will have to enter the Hell. [16] Then it will be said, "This is what you used to deny." [17]

No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in *'illiyyūn*. [18] And what may let you know what *'illiyyūn* is? [19] A register inscribed, [20] attended by those (angels) who are blessed with nearness to Allah! [21] Indeed the righteous will be in absolute bliss. [22] While (sitting) on thrones, they will be watching (the scenes of Paradise). [23] You will recognize on their faces the glamour of bliss. [24] They will be served with a pure sealed wine to drink, [25] the seal of which will be of musk. And in aspiring for this, the competitors should

compete. [26] **and it will be blended with (a drink from) Tasnīm,** [27] **a spring from which will drink those who are blessed with nearness.** [28]

Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, [29] **and when they passed by them, they used to wink at one another,** [30] **and when they went back to their family, they went enjoying their mockery,** [31] **and when they saw them, they said, "Surely these are the ones who have gone astray"** [32] **while they were not sent as watchmen over them.** [33] **So, today those who believed will laugh at the disbelievers.** [34] **While (sitting) on thrones, they will be seeing** [35] **whether the disbelievers have been paid back for what they used to do.** [36]

Commentary

According to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, Sūrah Taṭfīf was revealed in Makkah. Therefore, most of the copies of the Qur'ān refer to it as the Makkī Sūrah. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Muqātil and Ḍaḥḥāk رضي الله عنهم, it is a Madanī Sūrah, but only about eight verses are Makkī. Imām Nasā'ī transmits a narrative from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived in Madīnah, the people of Madīnah whose most transactions were based on measurements used to cheat and short measure. For this reason, Allah revealed the Sūrah. It is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that this is the first Sūrah that was revealed as soon as the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived at Madīnah. The reason is that it was a common practice in Madinah that the people used to be very strict in measuring when they had to receive something from others, but when they sold something, they used to cheat the buyers. After the revelation of this Sūrah, all of them abandoned this bad custom totally, and mended themselves in a way that they are now well-known in their honesty in weighing and measuring. (Reported by Ḥākim, Nasā'ī, and Ibn Mājah, with sound chain of narrators)

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ (Woe to the curtailers...83:1) The word *muṭaffifīn* 'those who give short measure or weight' is derived from *Taṭfīf* 'to give short measure or short weight'. The Qur'ānic expression 'Woe to the curtailers' is indicative of the injunction that this practice is prohibited.

Taṭfīf has a Wider Scope

The Qur'ān and Sunnah have prohibited *Taṭfīf* which primarily

signifies 'giving short measure and weight', because generally all transactions are carried out by things that can be measured or weighed. But the basic purpose of weighing or measuring is none else but to give a person what he deserves. It, therefore, indicates that the rule is not restricted to weights and measures only, but it includes all other means through which the rights of someone are evaluated, assessed or appraised. It is obligatory that all rights are given to the deserving persons in full, whether they are assessed by weight, measure, number or any other means. In terms of this concept of *Taṭfīf*, it is prohibited to give to any person less than his due.

It is recorded in Muwāṭṭā' of Imām Mālik that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ saw a person curtailing [cutting short] his bowing and prostration postures in prayers, he said to him:

لَقَدْ طَفَّفْتَ

'You have committed *Taṭfīf* (curtailed the right) of Allah.'

Having cited this statement of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ, Imām Mālik formulates the following postulate:

لكلّ شيءٍ وفاء وتطفيف

'Everything has a full due and a short measure.'

This postulate can apply even to prayers, ablution, cleanliness and all the rights of Allah and the ways of worship. If someone is deficient in fulfilling these rights of Allah, he is guilty of *Taṭfīf.* Similarly if one cuts short human rights [by failing to perform duties imposed upon him or keeping to the terms of agreement duly], he is covered by the rule laid down by the verse regarding *Taṭfīf.* For example, if an employee has entered into a contract with the employer that he shall work for specified time, it is imperative for him to work for the stipulated hours. If he curtails the hours, he is guilty of *Taṭfīf.* Generally, people - even scholars - are lax in this matter. They do not regard curtailment of their obligations relating to service or labour as sin. May Allah protect us from it!

ḤADĪTH: Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

خمس بخمس

'There are five sins, for which there are five punishments.'

[1] He who breaks his covenant, Allah will cause his enemy to subdue him.

[2] The nation that abandons the sacred laws of Allah, and decides cases according to other laws, poverty will prevail commonly among them.

[3] The nation among whom promiscuity and *zinā* (fornication or adultery) becomes rampant, Allah will punish them with epidemics and endemic diseases.

[4] Those who curtail measures and weights, Allah will cause famine to break out amongst them. and

[5] Those who fail to pay their *Zakāh*, Allah will withhold rain from them.

[Cited by Qurṭubī who said that Al-Bazzār has narrated the over-all sense of this *ḥadīth*, though with different words; and Mālik Ibn Anas has also narrated it from Ibn 'Umar].

Ṭabarānī narrates from Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "When it becomes rampant in a community to steal from the spoils of war, Allah will cast terror of enemies into their hearts; when usury becomes a common practice in a community, death becomes a frequent occurrence in that society; a community that gives short measure and weight, Allah cuts off their sustenance; those who decide against the truth, murder becomes common among them; and those who betray their agreement, Allah causes their enemies to prevail upon them." [Mālik has also transmitted it, but as a saying of Ibn 'Abbās. See Maẓharī].

Various Forms of Poverty, Famine and Curtailment of Sustenance

The Ḥadīth (cited above) states that people's 'sustenance' may be Cut Off as a punishment to short measuring: This can take different forms. They may be completely deprived of their sustenance; or sustenance may be available, but they may not be able to eat or use it, as it commonly happens nowadays in the case of many diseases. Likewise, 'famine' might take different forms: Items of necessity might be lacking; or they might be

available abundantly, but it might be difficult to purchase them, because the prices are unbearably exorbitant, as is experienced nowadays. The Ḥadīth says that in certain situations *faqr* will prevail in the society. *Faqr* is generally translated as 'poverty', but its real meaning in Arabic is 'being in need' or 'being dependent on someone'. Keeping this meaning in view, the situation of *faqr* pointed out in the Ḥadīth is not confined to lack of money and other necessary things, but it also includes a situation where people depend on others in their business and other necessities of life. The more a person is in need of others, the greater is his degree of *faqr*. Let us consider the conditions of the present age. Man is bound by the most complicated laws that restrict his living, his movement and his intentions, so that he is unable to eat what he wants to eat, or utter what he wants to utter. He possesses money, but he is not free to buy of his choice from where he wants to. He is not free to undertake a journey [or to travel] as and when he wants to. He is bound so much by these restrictive laws that he has no choice but to follow the official procedure for which he has to flatter the officials [at every level] including the peons. Without this, life is difficult. This entire system of dependence on others is a part of *faqr*. This elaborate explanation should dispel the doubts that might apparently arise regarding the statement of the Ḥadīth.

Sijjīn and *'illiyīn*

كَلَّآ إِنَّ كِتٰبَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِى سِجِّيْنٍ (Never! [i.e. they should never forget that Day.] Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [83:7]' The word *sijjīn* is derived from *sajana* which means to 'imprison in a narrow place'. According to Qāmūs, the word *sijjīn* means 'eternal imprisonment'. Traditions indicate that *sijjīn* is a special place where the souls of the non-believers are kept, and in the same place, the Record of the evil deeds of every wicked person is kept separately. It is also possible that in this there is a consolidated book in which the deeds of all the non-believers of the world are recorded.

Where is this place? According to a lengthy *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā Bara' Ibn 'Azib ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that *sijjīn* is beneath the seventh level of the earth, and *'illiyīn* is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. [Baghawī, and Aḥmad etc., as quoted by Maẓharī]. According to certain Traditions, *sijjīn* is the seventh earth which

contains the souls of the disbelievers, and *'illiyīn* is the seventh heaven which contains the souls of the believers.

The Locale of Paradise and Hell

Baihaqī has recorded a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ﷺ that Paradise is in the heaven, and Hell is in the earth. Ibn Jarīr cites in his commentary on the authority of Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn Jabal ﷺ a narrative of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, according to which he was asked about the meaning of the following verse:

وَجِایْٓءَ یَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ

'and Jahannam (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward, [89:23]'

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked from where the Hell be brought forward? He replied: "From the seventh earth." These narratives indicate that Hell will be brought forward from the seventh earth. It will suddenly flare up there, and all the oceans will join its blazing fire, and come forward in full view of all. This interpretation is reconcilable with narratives that define *sijjīn* as the name of a place in Hell. [Maẓharī]. And Allah knows best!

كِتٰبٌ مَّرْقُوْمٌ (A register inscribed!...83:9) The word *marqūm* (translated above as 'inscribed') signifies here *makhtūm* meaning 'sealed'. Imām Baghawī and Ibn Kathīr say that this statement is not the interpretation of *sijjīn*, but rather the explication of a phrase before that, namely:

كِتٰبَ الْفُجَّارِ

'Indeed the record of deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [83:7]'

It is a book inscribed and sealed. No one can add anything to it, nor can anyone remove anything from it, nor is any alteration possible in it. The place where it will be kept for safe-custody is called *sijjīn*, and it is the place where the souls of the wicked unbelievers are gathered.

كَلَّا بَلْ سكته رَانَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ (No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust...83:14). The word *rāna* is derived from *rain* and it means 'rust' or 'dust' or 'filth'. In other words, the rust of committing many sins has covered up their hearts. Just as rust consumes the iron, and turns it into dust, in the same way, the rust of

sins has destroyed their innate capacity to distinguish right from wrong. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Surely, when the servant commits a sin, a black dot appears on his heart. If he repents from it, his heart is polished clean. However, if he increases in the sin, the blackness continues to increase. That is the statement of Allah: كَلَّا بَلْ سكه رَانَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ 'No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [83:14]'." [Baghawī, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥākim have recorded it, and Tirmidhī has rated it as sahih, asquoted by Maẓharī]. The particle *kallā*, in Arabic grammar, is called *ḥarf-ur-rad'* 'particle of disapproval, particle of repelling or averting'. In the preceding verses, mention was made of the attitude of the unbelievers towards the Qur'ānic verses, in that when they are recited to them, they say, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13]. The present verse uses *kallā* to repel the false idea of the ignoramus [that Qur'ān is the tale of the ancients]. In fact, [the heavy] load of their sins have eclipsed the light and innate capacity to separate the right and the wrong. This capacity is innate and inborn in man. The verse purports to say that their rejection is not based on any logical or intellectual evidence, but their hearts have become blind, as a result they are unable to see the good and the bad.

إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَّبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمَحْجُوْبُوْنَ (No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day...83:15). This will be their punishment for their failure to recognise Allah in the world. The unbelievers will remain deprived of seeing their Lord on the Day of Judgement, and a screen will fall between them and their Lord. Imāms Shāfi'ī and Mālik said that in this verse is a proof that the believers and friends of Allah will be able to see Him. Otherwise, the wording that the unbelievers will be screened off from their Lord on that Day will have no real sense.

Special Note

According to some of the learned predecessors, this verse is a proof that man, by virtue of his innate nature, is forced to love Allah. Therefore, all unbelievers in the world, no matter how deeply they are steeped in their form of disbelief or hold false beliefs regarding the [Supreme] Being and attributes of Allah, there is a common denominator in their hearts. They love, respect and honour Allah. They worship Him according to their belief system in quest of Him and His pleasure. Because they have taken the wrong road, they are unable to reach their

destination, but they are, nonetheless, in search of the same destination of truth. If they did not have the desire to see their Lord, it would not have been said, in their punishment, that they will remain deprived of seeing Allah, because if a person is not desirous [rather he is hateful] of seeing Him, it would be no punishment for him.

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتٰبَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّيْنَ (No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in *'illiyyūn*....83:18). According to some authorities, *'illiyyūn* is the plural of *'uluww* and it signifies the 'highest point'. According to Farrā', this is the name of a place. It is not a plural, but on the measure of plural. When analysing the word *sijjīn* in the foregoing paragraphs, the traceable Tradition of Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib ﷺ was cited to prove that *'illiyyin* is a place on the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne where the souls of the believers and their registers of deeds are kept. The phrase: كِتٰبٌ مَّرْقُوْمٌ (A register inscribed...83:20) is not the interpretation of *'illiyyin*, but rather an explication their records of deeds, as in the verse that precedes it:

يَّشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ (...attended by those [angels] who are blessed with nearness to Allah!...83:21) The verb *yash-hadu* is derived from *shuhūd* which means 'to attend, to witness, to be present, to observe'. The verse purports to say that the record of deeds of the righteous will be in the custody of angels who are blessed with nearness to Allah. [Qurṭubī]. If *shuhūd* is taken in the sense of 'being present', then the attached pronoun will refer to *'illiyyīn* instead of *kitāb* or 'register' (and 'those who are blessed with nearness to Allah' will refer to the righteous people, and not to the angels), and the verse in that case will mean: 'The souls of those blessed with nearness to Allah will be in the place called *'illiyyīn*' because that is the abode of their souls, as *sijjīn* is the abode of the unbelievers. The proof of this is the narrative of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ recorded in Muslim in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the souls of the martyrs are in the crops of green birds, enjoying the rivers and gardens of Paradise, and their abode will be the lamps suspended from [the Divine] Throne. This indicates that the souls of the martyrs will be under the Divine Throne, and will be able to stroll in Paradise. In Sūrah Yāsīn, we came across the incident of Ḥabīb Najjār, where it is stated that:

قِيۡلَ ادۡخُلِ الۡجَنَّةَ قَالَ يٰلَيۡتَ قَوۡمِىۡ يَعۡلَمُوۡنَ بِمَا غَفَرَلِىۡ رَبِّىۡ

'He was told, "Enter the Garden!" He said, "If my people only knew how my Lord has forgiven me [36:26]"'

This indicates that no sooner he passed away than he entered Paradise. Similarly, some Prophetic narratives also show that the souls of the believers are in Paradise. The sum total of these verses and narratives is that the abode of all the souls is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. This is the locale of Paradise, and the souls have been given freedom of movement within the Paradise. Here reference has been made particularly to 'those souls who are blessed with nearness to Allah' because of the most exalted ranks they will enjoy. [This does not, however, mean that souls at the lower ranks will not be in this abode.] In fact, this will be the abode of the souls of all the believers as is narrated by Sayyidnā Ka'b Ibn Mālik ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

انما نسمة المؤمن طائر يعلّق فى شجر الجنّة حتّٰى ترجع الٰى جسده يوم القيٰمة.

(رواه مالک والنّسائی بسند صحیح)

'The soul of a believer is a bird that will be hanging in the tree of Paradise, until it returns to its body on the Day of Judgement.' [Mālik and Nasā'ī through an authentic chain of narrators. A Tradition of Umm Hānī' to the same effect is recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad and in Ṭabarānī. See Maẓharī].

The Abode of Human Souls After Death

What is the abode of human souls after death? In answer to this question, reports seem apparently different. Narratives were cited in explanation of *sijjīn* and *'illiyyūn* above which showed that the souls of the unbelievers are in *sijjīn* which is beneath the seventh earth, and the souls of the believers are in *'illiyyūn* which is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. Some traditions indicate that the souls of the unbelievers will be in Hell, and the souls of the believers will be in Paradise. Some narratives, like the lengthy narrative of Barā' Ibn 'Āzib, suggest that the souls of all the deceased, believers and non-believers, will be in the graves. When the angels carry the soul of a believer to the sky, Allah says: 'Keep the record of deeds of this servant of mine in *'illiyyūn* and return him to the earth, because I have created him from earth, and to it I shall return him, and from it I shall resurrect him.' Complying with this command, the angels return his soul to the grave. Likewise, the soul

of the non-believer is carried to the sky, but the doors are not opened for him. The angels will be commanded to return the soul to its grave. Imām 'Abdul Barr prefers this narrative and believes that the souls of all [believers and non-believers] remain in their graves. As for the first two sets of traditions, there is no contradiction because, carefully considered, *'illiyyūn* is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne, and this is exactly the locale of Paradise, as is clear from the Qur'ānic text:

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهٰى عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَاْوٰى

'by sidrat-ul-muntaha (the lot-tree in the upper realm), near which there is Jannat-ul-ma'wa (the Paradise of Abode), [53:14-15]'

This clearly states that Paradise is near the lot-tree in the upper realm, and *aḥādīth* confirm that the lot-tree is in the seventh heaven. Thus it may be argued that since the abode of the souls is *'illiyyūn*, Paradise must be near it. These souls will stroll in and along the Gardens of Paradise. Therefore, their abode may be said to be Paradise.

Similarly, the souls of the unbelievers remain in *sijjīn* which is situated beneath the seventh earth. It is also proved by ahadith that Hell is beneath the seventh earth, and the dwellers of *sijjīn* will receive the heat and torture of the Hell. Therefore, it would be correct to say that their abode is in Hell.

However, the hadith that informs us that the souls of the unbelievers will remain in the graves, is apparently contradictory to the preceding two narratives. The Baihaqī of his time, Qāḍī Thanā'ullah Pānī Patī, in his Tafsīr Maẓharī, has reconciled them thus: It is not far-fetched to assume that *'illiyyūn* and *sijjīn* are the real abodes of the souls, but they have a special connection with their graves. None, besides Allah, knows the actual nature of the connection. However, there is the sun and the moon in the sky, but their rays fall on the earth and provide to it light and heat. Similarly, the souls of *'illiyyūn* and *sijjīn* may have some spiritual connection with the graves. The scholarly view of Qāḍī Thanā'ullah Pānī Patī has just been discussed in Sūrah Nāzi'āt, the sum total of which is as follows: There are two types of soul: The one is a subtle substance that permeates the human body. Despite being a material substance, it is too subtle to be visible, and its other name is *nafs*. The other soul is abstract and non-material, pure essence. The pure, abstract and non-material soul

is the life of the first soul, and therefore it is called the 'soul of soul'. Both the categories of souls are connected to human body, but the first type of soul resides in the human body. When the soul leaves the body, death occurs. The second type of soul is connected with the body more closely than the first type, but Allah alone knows the nature of the connection. The first soul, after death, is taken to the heaven, and then returned to the grave. Grave is its abode where it is rewarded and punished. The abstract soul remains in *'illiyyūn* or *sijjīn* [as the case might be]. Thus we have several views on the issue. The final destination of souls is Paradise or *'illiyyūn*, or its opposite Hell or *sijjīn*. The abode of the abstract souls is *'illiyyūn* or *sijjīn*. The souls of the first type, the *nafs*, or the body, remains in the grave after death. And Allah knows best!

وَفِیْ ذٰلِکَ فَلْیَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنٰفِسُوْنَ (and in aspiring for this, the competitors should compete....83:26) The word *tanāfus* means for a few people 'to try or strive to gain some desirable things before others can get them.' Having mentioned the bounties of Paradise, the attention of heedless people are drawn to the fact that they are thinking that certain material things are desirable, and therefore they are competing one another to obtain them before others. They are told that the material blessings [after which they are running] are perishable. They should not be made the ultimate goal of life, nor the object of racing. Man should be content with what he has for the comfort of the fleeting period of this life. If he loses the means, it should not hurt him much, because it is not a loss that cannot be recovered. However, people with aspiration should aspire, race and compete for the blessings of Paradise that are perfect and eternal in every possible dimension. How aptly the late poet Akbar has put it:

یہ کہاں کا فسانہ ہے سود و زیاں، جو گیا سو گیا جو ملا سو ملا
کہو دل سے فرصت عمر ہے کم، جو دِلا تو خدا ہی کی یاد دِلا

'Gain and loss - what fiction is this?
What is lost is lost, what is gained is gained
Say to the mind, the life is little.
If you wish to remind me, remind me of God.'

اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ اَجْرَمُوْا کَانُوْا مِنَ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا یَضْحَکُوْنَ (Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, 83:29). In these verses, Allah depicts fully the attitudes of the followers of falsehood [non-believers] towards the

upholders of truth [the believers]. The non-believers used to laugh at the believers in the worldly life. In other words, they would mock at them and despise them. Whenever they would pass by the believers, they would wink at each other in contempt of them. When the non-believers returned home, they would take great pleasure in describing the mocking manner in which they treated the poor believers, saying that Muḥammad has misled the simpletons.

If we review the situation today, [it is no better.] People whose minds are contaminated with contemporary secular education, are careless about the religion and the Hereafter. Belief in Allah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ is nominal. They treat the [religious] scholars and righteous people exactly in the same manner as the non-believers used to treat the Companions in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ]. May Allah salvage the Muslims from this painful scourge. There is much solace in this verse for the righteous believers. Never bother about their laughter and mockery. How well a poet puts it:

ہنسے جانے سے جب تک ہم ڈریں گے
زمانہ ہم پہ ہنستا ہی رہے گا

'So long as we fear people's laughter [at us],
the people will continue laughing at us'

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Taṭfīf
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq

(The Splitting)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 25 verses and 1 section.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 25

إِذَا السَّمَآءُ انْشَقَّتْ ﴿١﴾ وَاَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَاِذَا الْاَرْضُ
مُدَّتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَاَلْقَتْ مَافِيْهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ﴿٤﴾ وَاَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ
﴿٥﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الْاِنْسَانُ اِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلٰقِيْهِ ﴿٦﴾ فَاَمَّا
مَنْ اُوْتِىَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ ﴿٧﴾ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَّسِيْرًا ﴿٨﴾
وَّيَنْقَلِبُ اِلٰۤى اَهْلِهٖ مَسْرُوْرًا ﴿٩﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْ اُوْتِىَ كِتٰبَهٗ وَرَآءَ ظَهْرِهٖ
﴿١٠﴾ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُوْا ثُبُوْرًا ﴿١١﴾ وَّيَصْلٰى سَعِيْرًا ﴿١٢﴾ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فِىْۤ
اَهْلِهٖ مَسْرُوْرًا ﴿١٣﴾ اِنَّهٗ ظَنَّ اَنْ لَّنْ يَّحُوْرَ ﴿١٤﴾ بَلٰۤى اِنَّ رَبَّهٗ كَانَ بِهٖ
بَصِيْرًا ﴿١٥﴾ فَلَاۤ اُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ﴿١٧﴾
وَالْقَمَرِ اِذَا اتَّسَقَ ﴿١٨﴾ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ ﴿١٩﴾ فَمَالَهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَاِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْاٰنُ لَا يَسْجُدُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ بَلِ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا يُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوْعُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ
بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ
مَمْنُوْنٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

When the sky will split apart, [1] and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to, [2] and when the earth will be stretched (to give room to more people), [3] and it will throw up whatever it contains, and will become empty, [4] and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to, (then man will see the consequences of his deeds.) [5] O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet Him. [6] So, as for him whose book (of deeds) will be given to him in his right hand, [7] he will be called to account in an easy manner, [8] and he will go back to his people joyfully. [9] As for the one whose book (of deeds) will be given to him from his back side, [10] he will pray for death, [11] and will enter the blazing fire. [12] He had been joyful among his people. [13] He thought he would never revert (to Allah). [14] Why not? Indeed his Lord was watchful over him. [15] So, I swear by the twilight (after sunset), [16] and by the night and what it envelops, [17] and by the moon when it develops at the full, [18] you shall certainly ascend from stage to stage. [19] So, what has happened to them that they do not believe, [20] and when the Qur'ān is recited to them, they do not offer *sajdah* (prostration)? [21] Rather, those who disbelieve deny (the truth). [22] And Allah is most aware of what they store. [23] So give him the 'good news' of a painful punishment, [24] but those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them there is a reward that will never be interrupted. [25]

Commentary

The present Sūrah depicts the conditions that will prevail on the Day of Judgement, such as reckoning and accountability, reward of good and torment of evil. The heedless man is asked to look into himself and his environs, which will lead him to believe in Allah and the Qur'ān. [The powerful opening of the Sūrah sketches some of the scenes of universal upheaval]. First, it speaks about the sky that will split apart. Then it goes on to speak about the earth that will be stretched and will throw up whatever it contains - whether natural treasures, or buried treasures, or dead human bodies, and then it will become empty. A new earth will be prepared for *Ḥashr* (Gathering of the Day of Requital). It will have neither caves nor mountains, neither buildings nor trees. It will be flat and smooth. It will be stretched so that there is ample room for the former as well as the latter generations to gather on the plain. This description

has been given in other Sūrahs with different styles, but in the present verses, there is an addition. About what Allah will demonstrate about the heaven and earth on the Day of Judgement, the following comment is made:

وَاَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ (and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to,...84:5) The verb *adhinat* means 'it will listen'. Here listening includes obedience. The verb *ḥuqqat* may be interpreted as 'It had an obligation to listen and obey Allah's command'.

Two Categories of Divine Commands

The obedience of the heaven and the earth, referred to here, may have two meanings, because the Divine commands are of two kinds: [1] the Divinely legislated [*tashrī'ī*] injunctions; and [2] the cosmic and destined [*takwīnī* and *taqdīrī*] commands. In the former case, the command appears as a law the violation of which is punishable. However, men are not practically coerced in the sense that they become practically unable to violate it. Instead, they have their free will to choose whether to abide by the law or to violate it. Such laws are imposed upon those who are endowed with intellect like humans and Jinn. This divides them into believers and non-believers, obedient and disobedient. In the former case, the commands are implemented by force. No one can deviate from them in the least. The entire universe, including humans and Jinn, follow them by force. The cosmic commands [which Allah has decreed] are applied forcefully and all the creatures, whether believers or unbelievers, pious or impious, have no choice or will but to do according to that command.

ذرّہ ذرّہ دہر کا پابستۂ تقدیر ہے
زندگی کے خواب کی جامی یہی تعبیر ہے

'Every particle in this world is bound by the Divine Decree.
Jāmī, this is the interpretation of the dream of life.'

It is possible that Allah will, on that day, endow the sky and the earth with special sense and perception like humans and Jinn. When they receive a command from Allah, they, of their own volition choose to act upon it. Alternatively, the command may refer to the second kind, that is, the cosmic command that no one can violate. But the words, وَاَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ "and will listen to [the command of] its Lord, and it ought to," are closer to the first meaning of command, while the second one is possible, if these

words are taken in their figurative sense.

وَاِذَا الْاَرْضُ مُدَّتْ (and when the earth will be stretched [to give room to more people]...84:3) The word *madda* means 'to stretch, spread, expand out'. Sayyidnā Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh ﷺ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that on the Day of Judgement the earth will be stretched out like leather (or rubber) and expanded into a smooth plain, and there will be just enough space on it for all individuals of human race to keep their feet. To understand this tradition, it is necessary to keep in mind that on the Day of Resurrection all individuals who will have been born from the inception of creation till resurrection will be brought back to life simultaneously. Thus each individual will have just enough space on the earth where he could place his feet. [Transmitted by Ḥākim with a good chain of authorities - Maẓharī].

وَاَلْقَتْ مَافِيْهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ (and it will throw up whatever it contains, and will become empty...84:4) The earth will, with one convulsion, throw up whatever it contains in its belly, whether natural treasures or buried treasures, or mines, or dead human bodies and their remains and particles.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْاِنْسَانُ اِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلٰقِيْهِ (O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet Him...84:6) The word *kadḥ* means to 'exert one's efforts fully', and 'to your Lord' means 'to meet your Lord'. In other words, every effort of man would end at his Lord.

Return to Allah

Mankind is addressed in this verse and shown a road that if he were to think about it carefully, and use his sense and intelligence, he could exert his efforts in the right direction that will ensure for him welfare, well-being and safety in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. First, it has been pointed out that man, whether he is good or bad, believer or non-believer, has the natural tendency to exert himself in order to achieve his goal. A good-natured person will work hard and adopt lawful means to acquire his livelihood and necessities of life. A bad person cannot obtain his needs and objective without working hard. Thieves, robbers, rouges, cheats and looters apply their minds and exert their physical strength in order to achieve their objective. Secondly, it has been pointed

out that if the intelligent man were to think carefully, all his movements and pauses are stations of a long journey he is going through, though unconsciously. This journey will end at his presence before Allah, that is, at death. This is stated in the phrase *ilā rabbika* 'to your Lord'. This is a statement of reality which none can deny. All efforts, [good or bad], must end with death. The third point is that after death, in the presence of his Lord, he will have to give an account of his movements and deeds, and of his efforts. This is rationally necessary and justified, so that the consequences of good and bad may be separately known, because such distinction is not known in this life. A good person may work hard for a month or so in order to obtain his livelihood and necessities of life, but thieves and looters may obtain them overnight. If there is no time of reckoning or punishment, both of them [the good and the bad] will be equal, which is contrary to reason and justice. At the end, the verse says: فَمُلٰقِيْهِ (then you have to meet Him.) The translation given above is based on the assumption that the attached pronoun (*hī*) refers to Allah. The sense is that every person has to meet his Lord and to present himself before him to give the account of his deeds. Another possible interpretation is that the attached pronoun (*hī*) refers to '*kadḥ*' (working hard). Given this interpretation, the translation of the verse would be: "O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet it." And the sense would be: 'you have to meet the good or bad consequences of your working hard.'

The verses that follow depict separately the consequences of the good and the bad people, of the believers and the non-believers. First, the ledger of deeds must be received in the right or the left hand. Those who receive the ledgers in their right hands will be the inmates of Paradise with its eternal blessings. Those who receive the ledgers in their left hands will be the inmates of Hell. The point for careful consideration is that necessities of life, as well as unnecessary desires are fulfilled by both righteous and wicked people in this world, and thus both spend their lives in some way or the other, but the consequences of the two [for the Hereafter] are diametrically opposite to each other. One results in eternal and unending comfort, and the other results in eternal perdition, torture and torment. Man still has the chance [while he is living] to redirect his attention to working hard towards switching the situation in a direction

that not only fulfils his legitimate needs and desires in this world, but also attains the eternal pleasures of the Hereafter.

فَاَمَّا مَنْ اُوْتِیَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِیَمِیْنِهٖ ﴿۷﴾ فَسَوْفَ یُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا یَّسِیْرًا ﴿۸﴾ وَّیَنْقَلِبُ اِلٰۤی اَهْلِهٖ مَسْرُوْرًا ﴿۹﴾

(So, as for him whose book [of deeds] will be given to him in his right hand, he will be called to account in an easy manner, and he will go back to his people joyfully....7-9)

This verse describes the condition of the believers. Their books of deeds will be given to them in their right hands. An easy reckoning will be taken from them and the welcome news of Paradise will be given to them. They will return to their families joyfully.

It is reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī from Sayyidah 'Ā'shah رضی اللّٰہ عنہا that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

من حوسب یوم القیٰمة عذّب

"He who is required to account for [or questioned about] his deeds will have to be punished."

At this Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللّٰہ عنہا asked, "What is the meaning of the [following] verse ?" یُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا یَّسِیْرًا (he will be called to account in an easy manner,..84:8). The Holy Prophet ﷺ explained that the verse signifies 'the deeds will merely be presented before Allah without being questioned. As for the person whose deeds are scrutinised, he will never be able to escape torment'.

This explanation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ clarifies that the deeds of the believers will also be presented before Allah, but by virtue of their faith, not all of their actions will be scrutinised. This is referred to as 'account in an easy manner'. The words 'he will go back to his people joyfully' may be interpreted in one of two ways. This may refer to the Houris who will be his family members in Paradise, or it may refer to his family members in the world who will be present in the Plain of Gathering, and he, after knowing about his success, will impart to them, according to the custom of this life, the welcome news of his achievement. The commentators have mentioned both possibilities in interpreting this sentence. [Qurṭubī].

اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فِیْۤ اَهْلِهٖ مَسْرُوْرًا (He had been joyful among his people...84:13). This verse tells us that those who will be given their Record in their left hands

from behind their backs, they will desire death and destruction under the impression that this might end their misery. But it will not be possible for them to die. One of the reasons given here for his misery is that he used to live joyfully among his people in the world, and he was completely oblivious of the Hereafter. The believers, on the other hand, never for a moment were oblivious of the Hereafter in the life of this world. At every moment of pleasure and comfort, they were anxious and worried about the Hereafter. The Qur'ān quotes the believers on another occasion as saying:

إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِيٓ أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ

> 'Indeed we were afraid (of Allah's punishment) when we were amidst of our family, [Aṭ-Ṭūr 26]

In other words, they lived among their families and yet were fearful and conscious of the Hereafter. The consequences of the two groups will be appropriate to their respective positions. Those who led a life of luxury and pleasure in this world with their families oblivious of the Hereafter, their portion will be punishment of Hell in the next world. Those who were aware of reckoning and feared punishment in the next world will live with their families in eternal luxury, pleasure and happiness. This indicates that a believer should not be immersed in the comforts of this life. At no time and in no circumstance should he be oblivious to the reckoning of the Hereafter.

فَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ وَالَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ. وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ (So, I swear by the twilight [after sunset], and by the night and what it envelops, and by the moon when it develops at the full...84:16-18) In these verses Allah takes oath by four phenomena and reinforces what was asserted in :

إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ

'you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord'

If we consider the four phenomena by which oath is taken, it bears evidence to the subject which is forthcoming in the complement of the oath, that is, the condition of man never remains the same at all times. He undergoes changes and unexpected phases all the time. The first phenomenon that brings about a change in his life is the twilight after the sunset, or the red glow that remains on the west side of the sky after

the sunset in the evening. This is the beginning of the night. This is the harbinger of a massive change in human conditions, that is, the light is disappearing and a flood of darkness is setting in. The second phenomenon by which oath is taken is night itself which completes the change in his life. The third phenomenon by which oath is taken includes all things that night envelops or shrouds. The primitive sense of the word *wasaqa* means to 'pile, gather, heap up the thing'. If it is taken in general sense, it embraces every member of the entire universe which the darkness of night covers, such as animals, vegetation, minerals and inorganic matter, mountains and oceans. By extension, the word would comprehend all things that normally disperse in the light of day and retreat to their own places at night. Human beings return to their homes, animals to their habitats and birds to their nests. Business goods and merchandise are or piled up in one place. This massive change is related to man himself. The fourth phenomenon by which oath is taken is in the following verse: وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ (and by the moon when it develops at the full...84:18). The word *ittisāq* is also derived from *wasaqa* and it means 'to gather'. The 'gathering of moon' signifies that it gathered its light, and it became complete and full *[badr]* the moon of the 14th night. The phrase إِذَا اتَّسَقَ *idhat-tasaqa* in relation to moon points to the phenomenon that it goes through various phases. First, it appears as a very fine semicircle. Then its light grows progressively night after night, until it becomes *badr kāmil* [full moon of the 14th night]. Having taken oath by the vicissitudes of the four phenomena, the Sūrah asserts the subject: لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ (you shall certainly ascend from stage to stage....84:19) The word *ṭabaq* or *ṭabqah* refers to a 'stage'. Its plural is *ṭabaqāt*. The verb لَتَرْكَبُنَّ *latarkabunna* is derived from *rukūb* which means 'to mount or mount up'. The verse purports to say that mankind from the inception to the end of his life will continue to mount up stage by stage, or will pass through all the conditions, gradually and in stages referred to in the preceding verses, that is, periods of light and darkness and other phenomena. He never remains in one condition all the time. He gradually goes through the vicissitudes of life.

Vicissitudes of Human Life, His Eternal Journey and His Final Destination

In the first instance the male sperm is united with the female egg to

form a new human organism. This is turned into a blood-clot which transforms into a lump of flesh, and the lump is formed into bones, and the bones are clothed in flesh. The limbs of the human body thus were completed. Then the soul was breathed into him, and he became a living human being. His first food in the womb of his mother was the unclean blood of the mother's womb. Nine months later, Allah made his way easy to come into the world. Now instead of the unclean blood, he got the [pure] milk of his mother's [breast]. When he saw the wide atmosphere and air of the world, he began to grow and develop. Within the first two years of his life, he started moving and walking about, and was able to talk. He weaned and began to eat more delicious and different types of food. As he grew a little older, he made play and amusement his daily preoccupation. When his intelligence developed [sufficiently], he was tied up in educational and training activities. When he grew into a youth, he abandoned all previous activities and replaced them with youth activities and ushered himself in a new era where marriage, children and house-keeping became his day-to-day preoccupation. Eventually, this era too neared its end. His physical and other prowess began to give up, and every day he fell prey to new ailments. Old age set in. The final stage of this life, that is, death, began to mount. All this happens in full view of everyone. No one dare deny this. But the ignoramus assumes that death or grave is his final stage, and there is nothing beyond. Allah, the Creator of the universe, the Omniscient, made it known, through the various Prophets [through the ages], to the heedless man that grave is not the final stage of his life, but it is merely a waiting-room to enter an enormously large and gigantic world that is yet to come, where the final examination will be conducted and the final stage of his life will be determined. In this world, he will celebrate the Divine remembrance and enjoy eternal comfort and pleasure or he will suffer eternal perdition and damnation [depending on the final assessment]. This is where the vicissitudes of his life will end. Thus the Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ

'Surely, to your Lord is the return [96:8]'

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

'and that to your Lord is the end (of every one), [42]'

إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا

'you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord [84:6]'

The ignoramus and unmindful man is made aware of the fact that the vicissitudes of life are stages in the journey to his final destination. Man ought to realise that walking, moving about, sleeping, waking, and standing and sitting are conditions, in the process of which he is covering the stages of his journey. Eventually, he will reach his Lord and, accounting for his life-long deeds, he will find his final abode that will be a place of never-ending comfort, luxury and pleasure, or [God forbid!] a place of never-ending retribution, torture and torment. A wise person should treat himself in this world as a traveller and prepare himself for the next world. His main goal in this life should be to cultivate for the next life as the Prophet ﷺ said:

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ

"Be in this world as though you are a stranger or a wayfarer."

Under the phrase above *tabaqan 'an ṭabaq* 'from stage to stage', a similar narration is cited by Abū Nu'aim from Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ stated that these verses remind the unmindful of his creation, the vicissitudes of his life and instructs him to reconsider his position and the consequences [of his attitude in this life as there is still time] and to prepare for next life. However, despite these clear guidelines, there are people who never desist from their heedlessness. Therefore, the verse concludes:

فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ، وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ

> So, what has happened to them that they do not believe, and when the Qur'ān is recited to them, they do not offer *sajdah* [prostration]? (84:20-21)

It means that when the Qur'ān, replete with clear guidelines, is recited to them, they do not bow in submission.

The word *sajdah / sujūd* literally denotes 'to bow' and it connotes 'obedience'. Obviously, the word here is not used in its technical sense. It is used in the sense of bowing in submission with respect, humbleness and humility. The reason [for this interpretation] is quite clear. This verse does not command to prostrate at the time of recitation of a particular

verse. It is related to the entire Qur'ān. If the word *sajdah* had referred to the technical prostration, it would necessarily entail that prostration be offered at every verse of the entire Qur'ān, which by unanimous agreement of the Ummah is not the case. Neither *salaf* nor *khalaf* subscribe to this view. Now remains the question whether or not a *sajdah* is obligatory when this verse is recited. (There is a disagreement among the jurists on this point) By a long stretch of imagination, it is possible to use this verse in evidence or support of arguing in favour of prostration being obligatory on recitation of this verse, as some of the Ḥanafī jurists have done. According to them, the definite article al- 'the' in the word al-Qur'ān stands for the article that is used to indicate previous knowledge, and thus the word al-Qur'ān here refers to this particular verse under comment, not to the entire al-Qur'ān or the Holy Book. However, this interpretation is after all merely a possibility, but the clear context of the verse indicates that it seems to be far-fetched to take the verse in this sense. And Allah knows best! The true interpretation can be determined by prophetic narratives, the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and that of the noble Companions. The narratives pertaining to *sajdah* of *tilāwah* differ. Some indicate that it is an obligatory duty to make *sajdah* on this verse, and others indicate that it is not. As a result, there is a difference of opinion among jurists. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah holds the view that prostration at this verse is an obligatory duty as is obligatory at other verses of *mufaṣṣal*. Imām A'ẓam adduces the following Aḥādīth in favour of his opinion:

Bukhārī recorded from Abū Rāfi' ؓ that he prayed the 'Ishā' [Night] prayer behind Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ, and the latter recited: إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْشَقَّتْ (When the sky will split apart) and at the relevant verse, he prostrated. So, Sayyidnā Abū Rāfi' ؓ asked him what type of prostration it was. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ replied: "I prostrated at this verse behind Abul Qāsim in a *ṣalāh*, and I will never cease prostrating during its recitation until I meet him on the Plain of Gathering." Muslim transmitted a narrative from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that they prostrated with the Holy Prophet ﷺ at relevant verses of this Sūrah, and of اِقْرَاْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ

Qurṭubī reports from Ibn-ul-'Arabī that the veritable view is that this verse is one of the verses at which it is an obligatory duty to prostrate

when read or recited or heard being recited. However, the people among whom Ibn-ul-'Arabī lived' it was not customary among them to prostrate at this verse. They probably followed an Imam, according to whom the prostration was not obligatory. As a result, Ibn-ul-'Arabī says that whenever he led the congregational prayer, he would avoid reciting Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq, because in his view prostration at the relevant verse is obligatory. If he does not perform the prostration, he would be sinning. If he does perform the prostration, the entire congregation would regard it an unnecessary act. Therefore, he felt he should not unnecessarily split the community. And Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Burūj
(Stellar Formations)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 22 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 22

وَالسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوْجِ ﴿١﴾ وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُوْدِ ﴿٢﴾ وَشَاهِدٍ
وَّمَشْهُوْدٍ ﴿٣﴾ قُتِلَ اَصْحٰبُ الْاُخْدُوْدِ ﴿٤﴾ النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُوْدِ ﴿٥﴾
اِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُوْدٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَّهُمْ عَلٰى مَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ شُهُوْدٌ ﴿٧﴾
وَمَا نَقَمُوْا مِنْهُمْ اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَمِيْدِ ﴿٨﴾ الَّذِىْ لَهٗ
مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ﴿٩﴾ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوْبُوْا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيْقِ ﴿١٠﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ
جَنّٰتٌ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۭ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿١١﴾ اِنَّ بَطْشَ
رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيْدٌ ﴿١٢﴾ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ يُبْدِئُ وَيُعِيْدُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَهُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الْوَدُوْدُ
﴿١٤﴾ ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيْدُ ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيْدُ ﴿١٦﴾ هَلْ اَتٰىكَ
حَدِيْثُ الْجُنُوْدِ ﴿١٧﴾ فِرْعَوْنَ وَثَمُوْدَ ﴿١٨﴾ بَلِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فِىْ
تَكْذِيْبٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَّاللّٰهُ مِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ مُّحِيْطٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ بَلْ هُوَ قُرْاٰنٌ مَّجِيْدٌ
﴿٢١﴾ فِىْ لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوْظٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

I swear by the sky, the one having stellar formations, [1] **and by the Promised Day,** [2] **and by that which attends, and that which is attended,** [3] **cursed were the People of the Trench,** [4] **the (people of the) fire that was rich with fuel,** [5] **when they were sitting by it,** [6] **and were watching what they were doing with the believers.** [7] **And they had blamed them for nothing but that they believed in Allah, the All-Mighty, the Worthy of All Praise,** [8] **the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is witness over every thing.** [9] **Surely, those who persecuted the believing men and the believing women, then did not repent, for them there is the torment of Jahannam (Hell), and for them there is the torment of burning.** [10] **As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them there are gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the big achievement.** [11]

The seizure of your Lord is severe indeed! [12] **Surely He originates (creation) and repeats (it after death).** [13] **And He is the Most-Forgiving, the Most-Loving,** [14] **the Master of the Throne, the Glorious.** [15] **He is ever doer of what He intends.** [16]

Has the come to you the story of the forces, [17] **of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and Thamud?** [18] **But those who disbelieve are (engaged) in denying (the truth).** [19] **And Allah has encircled them from all sides.** [20] **The reality is that it is the glorious Qur'an,** [21] **(recorded) in the Preserved Tablet (Lauh Mahfuz).** [22]

Commentary

وَالسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوْجِ (I swear by the sky, the one having stellar formations....85:1) The word *burūj* is the plural of *burj* which means 'a large mansion or fortress'. The Qur'ān says:

وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِىْ بُرُوْجٍ مُّشَيَّدَةٍ

'...even though you are in fortified castles [4:78]'

Here the word *burūj* means 'castles'. The primitive sense of the word *barj* is to become manifest'. The word *tabarruj* means 'to display one's beauty' as in the verse:

وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُوْلٰى

'...and do not display your beauty as it was previously displayed

in the Time of Ignorance [33:33]'

According to the majority of commentators like Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Daḥḥāk, Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, Qatādah, Suddī ﷺ and others, the word *burūj*, in this verse, refers to 'giant stars'. Other commentators take the word *burūj*, in this place, to refer to mansions and castles that are reserved in the sky for the guardian angels. Some of the later commentators chose the astronomical view in which the sky is divided into twelve parts, each one called a *burj*. The primitive philosophers believed that the *thawabit* (stationary) stars are fixed in these *burūj*. The planets move with the movement of their particular sky and the planets descend in these *burūj*. But this is absolutely incorrect. According to the Qur'ān, Allah has not fixed the stars and planets in the skies. In fact, every star and planet has its own orbit and revolves by itself as in Sūrah Yā Sīn:

وَكُلٌّ فِىْ فَلَكٍ يَّسْبَحُوْنَ

'...And each one is floating in an orbit. [36:40]'

The word *falak* in this verse does not refer to the sky, but rather to the orbits of the stars and planets in which they move. [Maẓharī]

وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُوْدِ. وَشَاهِدٍ وَّمَشْهُوْدٍ (and by the Promised Day, and by that which attends, and that which is attended...85:2,3) With reference to a prophetic *Ḥadīth* reported by Tirmidhī, the phrase 'the Promised Day' refers to the Day of Judgement; the phrase 'that which attends' refers to 'Friday'; and the phrase 'that which is attended' refers to the day of 'Arafah. Thus in this verse, Allah has taken oath by four objects: [1] 'the sky, the one having stellar formations'; [2] 'the Day of Judgement'; [3] 'Friday'; and [4] 'the Day of 'Arafah'. The relationship between the objects of oath and the subject of oath is as follows: They bear evidence to the Divine omnipotence, and they are a proof of reckoning and reward and punishment on the Day of Judgement. Friday and the day of 'Arafah (the main day of Hajj that is 9th Zul-Hijjah of the Islami Calender) are blessed days for the believers to accumulate treasures for the Hereafter. Further, the subject of oath curses the infidels who burned the Muslims on account of their faith, and gives cheerful news to the righteous believers of securing elevated ranks in the Hereafter.

The Story of the People of Trench

Verse 4 refers to the People of the Trench. Their story is recounted in a

Ḥadīth reported by Imām Muslim as follows: There was an infidel king who lived in bygone times. He had a soothsayer , or, according to some narrations, a magician. The infidel king is identified as the ruler of Yemen. His name, according to Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, was Yūsuf Dhu Nuwās, and he lived about seventy years before the birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The soothsayer or magician [occult teacher] said to the king that he should be given an intelligent boy, so that he could train him in the skill of foretelling or the black magic. Accordingly, the king sent a boy, 'Abdullāh Ibn Tāmir by name, to be trained by the soothsayer or magician [occult teacher]. Whenever the boy went to his teacher, he had to pass by a Christian monk. He followed the true religion of 'Isā عليه السلام and worshipped Allah. Since the religion of 'Īsā عليه السلام was the true religion in those days, the monk was, in fact, a Muslim. The boy sat with the monk and was very much impressed by his teachings. As a result, he frequented the monk's house and sat with him for long hours before proceeding to his teacher, and ultimately embraced Islam. Allah had blessed him with such a strong faith that he was prepared to bear any pain and persecution for the sake of Allah. His teacher used to beat him for his coming late. On his way back from the occult teacher, he would spend some time again with the monk and used to go home late. The family would then beat him up for being late. But he was so keen to have the company of the monk that he managed to sit regularly with the monk without fear of persecution. Through the blessings of this, Allah had gifted him with many miracles [*karamah*]. Once it happened that the boy saw a lion has blocked the path and prevented people from passing. They were perturbed. He picked a stone and prayed: "O Allah! If the religion of the monk is true, then kill this beast with this stone [so that people may pass]. And if the soothsayer or magician is true, then the beast must not die with my stone." So praying, he aimed at the lion and it died instantly. The news spread among the people that the boy possesses wonderful knowledge. A blind man heard about this and came up to him. He requested him to restore his sight. The boy conceded on the condition that he embraces Islam. The blind man agreed. The boy prayed and Allah restored his sight. The blind man became Muslim. The king came to know about these incidents, and he got the boy, the monk and the blind were apprehended. They were brought before the king. He got the blind and the monk killed, and ordered that the boy be taken to the summit of a mountain and be thrown

from there. But those who had taken him up there fell and died. The boy went home safely. Then the king ordered to have him drowned in the sea. The boy escaped safely, while the people who took him to the sea were drowned. The boy then himself told the king how to kill him. He told him to take an arrow from his quiver and place it in his bow, and reciting, بِاسْمِ اللّٰهِ رَبِّی 'In the name of Allah, my Lord' they should shoot. They did that and they boy finally died. In this way, the boy gave his life away but seeing this, the entire nation of the king cried out spontaneously: "We believe in Allah." At this, the king was greatly enraged and, after consultation with his cabinet, ordered for deep trenches to be dug and filled with fire. An announcement was then made that the people must renounce their faith in Allah. If they refuse, they would be thrown into the fiery furnace. Eventually, a woman carrying her infant child was brought to a trench, but she hesitated. Allah granted speech to her child who said: "O mother, be steadfast, because you are certainly on the truth." In this way, many people were burned. According to some reports, about twelve thousand people were burned to ashes and, according to other reports, the number is put more than this. Consequently, Divine wrath descended on the People of the Trench and fiery furnace. Reference in verse 4 is made to this incident after taking an oath.

In a narration of Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq, it is reported that the place where the boy 'Abdullāh Ibn Tāmir was buried had to be dug up for some important reason during the time of Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ. It was found that the body of 'Abdullāh Ibn Tāmir was intact, and he was sitting up. His hand was placed on his hip joint, where the arrow struck him. Someone moved his hand out from that place, and his wound started bleeding. When the hand was placed back in its position, the bleeding stopped. There was a ring in his finger which had the inscription: اَللّٰهُ رَبِّی "Allah is my Lord." The governor of Yemen informed Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ about this, and he wrote back in reply: "Bury the body back as it was with his finger-ring." [Ibn Kathīr]

Special Note

Ibn Kathīr, with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥātim, writes that the incidents of 'trenches of fire' took place many times in history in different parts of the world. Then Ibn Abī Ḥātim specifies three particular incidents: [1] a trench in Yemen. [This incident took place during the period of *fatrah*

(the interval between 'Īsā ﷺ and the Holy Prophet ﷺ), about seventy years before the advent of the Prophet ﷺ]; [2] a trench in Syria; and [3] a trench in Irān. He further states that the incident the Qur'ān refers to here in Sūrah Burūj is the first one that occurred in Najrān, the trench of the kingdom of Yemen, because that was in Arabia.

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوْبُوْا (Surely, those who persecuted the believing men and the believing women, then did not repent,...85:10) This verse describes the torment of the wrong-doers who burned the Muslims in the fire pit only on account of their faith. The description points out two things: [1] فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ (for them there is the torment of Jahannam) and [2] وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيْقِ (and for them there is the torment of burning). The second sentence may be treated as explicative of the first sentence, a statement for emphasis. It signifies that they will be put into Hell and will have to suffer eternal torment of the fire. Another possible interpretation is that the second statement describes the wrong-doers' torment in this world, as is narrated in some reports. The believers, who had been cast in fire pits, were spared the torture of fire, in that the souls of the believers were taken out before the fire could touch them. Only their dead bodies were lying in the fiery furnace. After that the fire flared up so high that it spread out wildly through the city and burned all those who were watching the fun of burning the Muslims. Only Yūsuf Dhu Nuwās managed to run away, and threw himself into the sea in order to save himself from the rage of the fire, but he got drowned and died. [Maẓharī].

Attached to the torment of Hell and the torment of burning for the wrong-doers is the restrictive phrase: ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوْبُوْا (then did not repent). That is, this torment is for those who did not repent of their deed and did not offer *taubah*. Thus this part of the verse invites people to repent. Sayyidnā Ḥasan ﷺ states: "Look at Allah's compassion and benevolence. They burned Allah's friends alive, yet He invites them towards repentance and forgiveness." [Ibn Kathīr].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Burūj
Ends here

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭāriq

(The Night-Comer)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 17 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 17

وَالسَّمَآءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَآ أَدْرٰىكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ ﴿٢﴾ النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ
﴿٣﴾ إِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ﴿٤﴾ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ
﴿٥﴾ خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّآءٍ دَافِقٍ ﴿٦﴾ يَّخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَآئِبِ
﴿٧﴾ إِنَّهُ عَلٰى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ ﴿٨﴾ يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَآئِرُ ﴿٩﴾ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ
قُوَّةٍ وَّلَا نَاصِرٍ ﴿١٠﴾ وَالسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ ﴿١١﴾ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ
الصَّدْعِ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلٌ فَصْلٌ ﴿١٣﴾ وَّمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّهُمْ
يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَّأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا ﴿١٦﴾ فَمَهِّلِ الْكٰفِرِينَ أَمْهِلْهُمْ
رُوَيْدًا ﴿١٧﴾

I swear by the sky and the Night-Comer, [1] and what may let you know what the Night-Comer is? [2] The star of piercing brightness! [3] there is no human being, but there is a watcher over him. [4] So, let man consider of which stuff he is created. [5] He is created of a spouting water [6] that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones. [7] Surely He is Powerful to bring him back [8] on a day when all the secrets will be searched out, [9] and he will have no strength (to defend), nor a supporter. [10] I swear by the sky that rains, [11] and

the earth that cracks open (for plants), [12] **this is a decisive word,** [13] **and it is not a joke.** [14] **They are devising plans,** [15] **and I Am devising plans.** [16] **So leave the disbelievers at the moment; give them respite for a while.** [17]

Commentary

After swearing an oath by the sky and stars, in this Sūrah, Allah asserts that He has assigned a guardian angel to every human being who watches over his deeds and actions, and accurate and immediate record is kept on the basis of which the reckoning will be made, and on the Day of Reckoning, all secrets will be revealed. The rational conclusion is that man must ponder over the consequences of the deeds he is doing in this life. Therefore, he should not, at any moment of his life, lose sight of what is to happen on the Day of Reckoning. Thereafter, the verse disposes of a doubt that the Satan perennially casts into the people's hearts. When they are dead and have become dust and decomposed particles, how will they be recomposed and life be brought back? This seems to be an imaginary thought, rather, in the view of the general public, it is impossible. In answer to this doubt, man is invited to reflect on his origin. At the inception, he was created from various elements collected from throughout the world, and Allah's Power transformed them into a human being who is able to listen and see. Allah Who has created him and looked after him is well able to bring him back to life after death. Then some events of the Day of Judgement are mentioned. Then, after swearing an oath by the earth and the sky, the negligent man is told that the Hereafter he is urged to care about is no joke or amusement, but it is a reality that has to come to pass. Towards the end of theSūrah, the unbelievers pose the question: If Allah abhors disbelief, idolatry and sins, why then does He not punish us in this life? The Sūrah ends with a rebuttal to this question. Let us now explain some expressions used in the Sūrah:

The first oath, in the beginning of the Sūrah, is by the sky and *ṭāriq*. The word *ṭāriq* means the 'Night-Comer'. Stars normally disappear during the day and only appear at night, therefore they are called *ṭāriq*. The Qur'ān itself raises the question:

وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ (and what may let you know what the Night-Comer is?...86:2) and then answers the question thus: اَلنَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ (The star of

piercing brightness!...86:3). The word *najm* means 'star'. The Qur'ān does not specify any particular 'star'. Therefore, it may be applied to any star. Some of the commentators say that *najm* refers to the Pleiades or Saturn, and they quote specimens of Arabic speech to confirm their argument. The word *thāqib* means 'piercing brightness'.

إِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ (there is no human being, but there is a watcher over him....86:4). This is the subject of the oath. The particle in at the beginning of the statement is used in the sense of 'no', that is, a negative particle; and the particle *lammā* is used in the sense of 'but/except', that is, it is an exceptive particle in the dialect of Banū Hudhail. The verse purports to say that there is not a single person over whom there is not a watcher [*ḥāfiẓ*]. The word *ḥāfiẓ* may mean 'guardian' who may watch over someone's actions and deeds, so that the reckoning is made on that basis. The word *ḥāfiẓ* may also be used in the sense of 'one who protects from calamities'. In the first sense, the word hafiz refers to the angels who record the deeds. Here the word *ḥāfiẓ* , although appears in the singular form, it is used in the generic sense, because there is not just a single recording angel, but there is a host of them as another verse testifies to this fact:

إِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحٰفِظِيْنَ كِرَامًا كٰتِبِيْنَ

'While [appointed] over you there are watchers,who are noble, the writers [of the deeds],[82: 10-11]'

According to the second sense of the word, *ḥāfiẓ* refers to the angels who have been appointed to protect man from all kinds of calamities that befall him day and night, except the calamities that Allah has decreed for him, as the following verse explicitly states:

لَهٗ مُعَقِّبٰتٌ مِّنْ ۢبَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖ يَحْفَظُوْنَهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِاللّٰهِ

'For him there are angels replacing each other, before him and behind him, who guard him under the command of Allah [13:11]

A tradition has reported the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying that Allah has appointed three hundred and sixty angels for every believer. They protect every limb of his. Of the three hundred and sixty, seven angels alone protect man's eye. These angels defend man from every calamity that is not decreed, like a fan chases away the flies coming to a vessel containing honey. If there are no security guards for man, the devils will

snatch them away. [Qurṭubī].

خُلِقَ مِنۡ مَّآءٍ دَافِقٍ يَخۡرُجُ مِنۡ بَيۡنِ الصُّلۡبِ وَالتَّرَآئِبِ (He is created of a spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones...86:6,7). The general body of commentators have explained that the spouting water (sperm) comes out from the loins of men and the chest-bones of women. However, the research of embryological science on the subject shows that the seminal fluid comes out from every part of human body, and every part of the foetus is made of the seminal fluid that has come out from that part of the man's and woman's body. The brain, of course, plays the greatest role in this matter. Thus experience shows that people who indulge in excessive cohabitation mostly suffer from weakness of mental weakness. The embryologists have at the same time discovered that the seminal fluid separates from all parts of the body, and through the spinal cord, collects in the testes and from there it spouts.

If these findings have any value, it is not far-fetched to reconcile them with the explanation of some of the commentators. Embryologists agree that the brain plays the most important role in the preparation of seminal fluid. The representative of the brain is the spinal cord that has come into the backbone from the brain, up to the loins and the testes. Some of its branches have come into the chest-bones. It is likely that the seminal fluid coming from the chest-bones into the woman's seminal fluid and the seminal fluid coming from the loins into a man's seminal fluid have a greater role to play . (Baidawi)

If we analyse the verse of the Qur'ān carefully, we notice that it does not specify 'man or woman'. It merely says 'He is created of a spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones.' This may simply signify that the seminal fluid comes out from the entire body of both men and women. The expression 'the entire body' is understood from the mention of the principal organs of front and back. The front part of the body is chest and the back part of the body is the loin. These are the principal parts of the body. The expression, 'the spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones' may mean 'comes out from the entire body'.

إِنَّهٗ عَلٰى رَجۡعِهٖ لَقَادِرٌ (Surely He is Powerful to bring him back...86:8) The word *raj'* means 'to bring back'. The verse signifies that Allah Who has

created him from a drop of seminal fluid is well able to bring him back to life after death a fortiori.

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَآئِرُ (on a day when all the secrets will be searched out..86:9). The word *tubla* literally means 'to test/examine' and*sarā'ir* means 'secrets'. On the Day of Reckoning, the secrets will be tested and examined and laid bare. Man's beliefs, his thoughts, and his motives and intentions that were hidden in this life, and no one knew about them, will be revealed in the Hereafter.

Likewise, his deeds and actions that he had done secretly, and no one was aware of them in this world, all of them will be tested and scrutinised on the Plain of Gathering and will be laid bare. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ has said that on the Day of Judgement Allah will disclose the secrets of all human beings. The sign of every good or bad belief and action will be displayed on man's face, in the form of beauty or darkness or gloom [depending on each individual's situation].[Qurṭubī].

وَالسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ (I swear by the sky that rains...86:11) The word *raj'* refers to 'the rain that comes down repeatedly'. In other words, the rain that comes down and stops and then returns.

إِنَّهٗ لَقَوْلٌ فَصْلٌ (this is a decisive word..86:13) In other words, the Qur'ān is truly a Decisive Word that decides between truth and falsehood, and there is no room for any doubt in it.

Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ says that he heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ as saying about the Holy Qur'ān:

كتاب فيه خبرما قبلكم وحكم ما بعدكم وهوالفصل ليس بالهزل

'[It is] a book which describes the stories of past communities and [it contains] injunctions for future generations. It is truly a Decisive Word. It is no joke.'

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭāriq
Ends here

Sūrah Al-A'lā

(The Most Exalted)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 19 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 19

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْاَعْلَى ﴿١﴾ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ فَسَوّٰى ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِىْ قَدَّرَ
فَهَدٰى ﴿٣﴾ وَ الَّذِىْٓ اَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعٰى ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهٗ غُثَآءً اَحْوٰى ﴿٥﴾
سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسٰٓى ﴿٦﴾ اِلَّا مَاشَآءَ اللّٰهُ اِنَّهٗ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا
يَخْفٰى ﴿٧﴾ وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرٰى ﴿٨﴾ فَذَكِّرْ اِنْ نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرٰى ﴿٩﴾
سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَنْ يَّخْشٰى ﴿١٠﴾ وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْاَشْقَى ﴿١١﴾ الَّذِىْ يَصْلَى
النَّارَ الْكُبْرٰى ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ لَايَمُوْتُ فِيْهَا وَلَايَحْيٰى ﴿١٣﴾ قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ
تَزَكّٰى ﴿١٤﴾ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهٖ فَصَلّٰى ﴿١٥﴾ بَلْ تُؤْثِرُوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا
﴿١٦﴾ وَالْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى ﴿١٧﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَفِى الصُّحُفِ الْاُوْلٰى
﴿١٨﴾ صُحُفِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى ﴿١٩﴾

Pronounce the purity of the name of your Most Exalted Lord, [1] who created (everything), then made (it) well, [2] and who determined a measure (for everything), then guided (it), [3] and who brought forth pasturage, [4] then turned it into blackening stubble. [5] We will make you recite, then you will not forget [6] except that which Allah wills. Indeed He knows what is manifest and what is hidden. [7] And We will facilitate for you (to reach)

the easiest way. [8] So, extend advice (to people) if advice is useful. [9] The one who fears (Allah) will take to the advice, [10] and it will be avoided by the most wretched [11] who will enter the Biggest Fire, [12] then he will neither die therein, nor live (a life worth mentioning). [13] Success is surely achieved by him who purifies himself, [14] and pronounces the name of his Lord, then offers prayer. [15] But you prefer the worldly life, [16] while the Hereafter is much better and much more durable. [17] Indeed this is (written) in the earlier divine scripts, [18] the scripts of Ibrahim and Musa. [19]

Commentary

Ruling [1]

Scholars have ruled that when anyone recites the verse: سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْاَعْلَى (Pronounce the purity of the name of your most exalted Lord...87:1) it is commendable to say:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْاَعْلَى

'I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord.'

This was the practice of all the noble Companions, like Sayyidna 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbaā, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Zubair, Abū Mūsā and 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضى الله عنهم اجمعين. Whenever they started reciting the Sūrah, they would recite:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْاَعْلٰى

'I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord.' [Qurṭubī].

It should be noted that the desirability of reciting this is outside of the prayer.

Ruling [2]

Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir Al-Juhanī ﷺ narrates that when the Sūrah Al-A'lā was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ instructed:

اجعلوها فى سجودكم

'Say this (Subḥāna Rabbiyal-A'lā) in your *sujūd* [prostrations]'

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْاَعْلَى (Pronounce the purity of the name of your Most exalted Lord.) The word *tasbiḥ* means 'to pronounce the purity' and سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ signifies to 'honour the name of your Lord'. When the name of Allah is pronounced, it should be done with utmost humility and respect.

His name should be kept pure and free from anything that is unbecoming to His sublime status. Allah should be called by the names He Himself has stated or taught the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is not permitted to call Him by any other name.

Ruling [3]

Besides, it is also included in the above imperative that there are some names exclusively meant for Allah; calling human beings or any other creation by those specific names is contrary to declaring the purity of Allah. Therefore, it is not permissible. [Qurṭubī]. Nowadays, people are not particular about names like 'Abdur Raḥmān, 'Abdur-Razzāq, 'Abdul Ghaffār and 'Abdul Quddūs. They call the persons bearing these names 'Raḥmān', 'Razzāq', 'Ghaffār', 'Quddus' and so on, for short. People have got into the habit of shortening such names without realising that the speakers as well as the listeners are committing a sin. People commit this joyless sin day and night without any reason.

Some commentators interpret the word *'ism'* does not mean 'name' in this verse. Instead, they say, it is referring to the *Dhāt* or the 'Being' of Allah. According to the Arabic expressions, this interpretation is not unlikely, and the Qur'ān has used the word *'ism'* in that sense also. The Ḥadīth that instructs us to recite the *tasbīḥ* in *sajdah* [prostration] is not "I pronounce the purity of the name of my most exalted Lord, but "I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord". This indicates that in this context *'ism'* is not used in the sense of 'name' but it refers to the Being of Allah Himself. [Qurṭubī]

Subtle and Profound Wisdom in the Creation of the Universe

اَلَّذِیْ خَلَقَ فَسَوّٰی وَالَّذِیْ قَدَّرَ فَهَدٰی (who created [everything], then made [it] well, and who determined a measure [for everything], then guided [it]...87:2,3). All these are the attributes of the 'Most Exalted Lord'. The first attribute is *khalaqa* which does not simply mean 'to make' or 'manufacture'. It has a deeper significance: 'to bring out something from pure non-existence into the realm of existence without the help of any pre-existing matter'. (This is the correct meaning of 'creation'. If something is made with the help of some pre-existing matter, it cannot be called 'creation' in its original sense.) This is not within the power of anyone else. Only the perfect power of Allah can bring things into existence, whenever He wills, without the help of any pre-existing matter.

The second attribute, which is connected with *takhlīq* (creation), is *sawwā*. This word is derived from *taswiyah,* and it literally means 'to make well or equal'. The verse signifies that Allah made the constitution of everything symmetrical or made it congruously consistent in its several parts, the body structure, shape and size, limbs and organs. Man and every other animal is adapted to the requirements of wisdom. The hands and legs, the tips of the fingers and toes have joints with different types of springy connective tissues that make it possible to bend and fold in different ways. If we look at another limb or organ of human body, its symmetry and balance baffles our imagination and is sufficient for us to believe in the consummate wisdom and power of the Creator of the universe.

The third attribute is *qaddara* which is derived from *taqdīr* and it means 'to determine; to measure; to balance; to design symmetrically; to decree/ decide'. The word is used in the last sense here. The verse purports to say that things in the world have not been created without purpose. Everything has been created for a specific purpose, and has been endowed with natural capacities to fit its function. If we look carefully, the principle does not apply only to specific species. Every member of the universe has been assigned a specific function to perform. We witness the manifestation of the assignments in the sky, the stars, lightning, rain, humans, animals, vegetation and minerals.

Maulānā Rūmī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ **says:**

خاک و باد و آب و آتش بندہ اند..........بامن و تومُردہ باحق زندہ اند

'The earth, the wind, the water and the fire___all of them are slaves of Allah.

According to me and you, they are senseless, but according to Allah, all of them are alive and sensible.

Allah has especially geared man and every species of animals to do particular works and they perform them according to their natural inclination, and their predisposition pivots around their respective tasks.

ہریکے رابہر کارے ساختند..............میل اور اوردلش اند اختند

Allah has created everything for a particular purpose
And has filled its heart with inclination towards it.

The fourth attribute of Allah is *fa-hadā* 'then guided it'. In other words, The Creator of the universe did not create things and left them to their own mercy to perform their particular function as they like, but they are shown the way in which they should be performed. As a matter of fact, He guided the entire creation by equipping each member of it with suitable nature to function for which it was created, whether the member is the sky or celestial creation, or it is the earth or the earthly creation. They all possess a special type of sense, though it is of a lower than that of man. The Qur'ān says:

رَبُّنَا الَّذِیٓ اَعۡطٰی کُلَّ شَیۡءٍ خَلۡقَهٗ ثُمَّ هَدٰی

'Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright . [20:50]'

As a result, since the inception of their creation, the skies, the earth, the stars and planets, mountains and oceans are all performing their functions accurately, without any failure or deviation. Humans and animals, in particular, whose intellect and sensibility can be observed easily, have been invested with capabilities of fulfilling their minute needs and repelling harmful things in a way that baffles the one who thinks about it. Since man possesses sense and intelligence of a higher degree, his capabilities may not be so much surprising, but let us look into wild animals, ferocious animals or beasts of prey, birds and insects. Each and everyone of them is able to obtain its necessities of life. They are able to find their habitats. They have not acquired the skills of fulfilling their individual and communal needs through a teacher that may educate or train them, nor did they need any school or college to acquire this knowledge and skill. Their education and training comes directly from the Creator of the universe. It is this divine guidance that has been referred to in the Holy Qur'ān by saying,

رَبُّنَا الَّذِیٓ اَعۡطٰی کُلَّ شَیۡءٍ خَلۡقَهٗ ثُمَّ هَدٰی

'Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright . [20:50]'

and in this Sūrah thus:

وَالَّذِیۡ قَدَّرَ فَهَدٰی

'and who determined a measure (for everything), then guided (it), [3]'

The Knowledge of Science is a Divine Gift to Man

Allah has equipped man with the higher order of intelligence and sense. The entire universe is made subservient to him,__the earth, mountains and oceans and everything created therein are made to serve man and created for his benefit. However, full advantage of them is not possible unless man acquires knowledge and skill to put various things together and produce a new item. Nature has provided man with intelligence and understanding to excavate mountains and dive into the oceans to obtain minerals and marine objects. He composes certain items like wood, iron, steel, copper, brass and so on and makes new items of his need. This knowledge and technology is not dependent on scientific research and college or university education. Even illiterate people have been doing this since the inception of human existence . This is intrinsic science that Allah has endowed upon man as a natural gift. Later, man developed the capability of doing technical and scientific research. He thus made progress in various fields of science and technology. The capability to do this is also a Divine gift.

Obviously, science and technology does not create anything, but it merely shows the way to use the created things. The initial knowledge about their use is taught by Allah, but there is a wide scope to make progress in it by the capabilities Allah has bestowed to man, the manifestation of which we are witnessing in this scientific age day by day, and what further range of these abilities and talents will manifest in future is unknown. All this is the interpretation of *hadā* '[He] guided (it), [3] In other words, Allah has placed in them potentials and capabilities to perform their natural functions. But alas! the scientists are getting more and more negligent, rather blind to these realities day by day.

وَالَّذِیْٓ اَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعٰی. فَجَعَلَهٗ غُثَآءً اَحْوٰی (and who brought forth pasturage, then turned it into a blackening stubble....87:4, 5)

The word *mar'ā* means 'pasturage'. This is the land that has grass growing on it, and that is used for animals to graze. The word *ghuthā'* refers to 'stubble, and scum borne upon the surface of a torrent'. The word *aḥwā* is derived from the root *ḥuwwah* which refers to 'a kind of black colour that comes upon a dense vegetation'. The verse purports to depict the Divine power and wisdom related to herbage and vegetation. He grows the green vegetation and then He gradually turns it into black

colour, and it loses its freshness. This directs man's attention also to his end. His body radiating with health, beauty, smartness and alertness is a Divine gift, but its tenure of life is limited. Eventually it will come to an end.

سَنُقْرِئُکَ فَلَا تَنْسٰی. اِلَّا مَاشَآءَ اللّٰهُ (We will make you recite, then you will not forget, except that which Allah wills. Indeed He knows what is manifest and what is hidden....87:6,7). In the preceding verses, Allah depicted the manifestation of His Omnipotence and [profound] wisdom. Thereafter, a few guidelines are given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ regarding his prophetic obligation. Before putting forth the guidelines, he is given the cheerful news of making his task easier. When the Qur'ān was revealed initially, and as Jibra'īl عليه السلام began to recite, the Holy Prophet ﷺ made haste to repeat, lest any word or sentence should be lost. He was, therefore, told not to make haste with it, and to wait until the angel had delivered the whole message, and then to repeat the words of the revelation, being assured that it was a Divine arrangement, and that nothing would be lost. On this occasion, he is still more plainly told: 'then you will not forget, except that which Allah wills.'

While Allah made the Holy Prophet ﷺ remember all of the Qur'ān, there were certain verses which Allah made him forget, because they had been abrogated. This was done by Allah's command, and is not done without reason. There are several ways in which this is done. One way of doing this is that a second clear injunction is revealed contrary to the first injunction. Another way of abrogating a particular verse is to obliterate a verse from the memory of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the memory of all other Muslims, as stated in:

مَانَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَتٍ اَوْنُنْسِهَا

'Whenever We abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten. [2:106]'

Some scholars interpret the exceptive sentence 'except that which Allah wills' differently. They say that for some reason Allah blots out temporarily a verse from Holy Prophet's ﷺ memory, but he may remember it again, in support of which the following narrative may be adduced: One day the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited a Sūrah, but omitted one of the verses. Sayyidnā Ubayy Ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه, one of the Prophet's scribes,

was present. He thought it might have been abrogated. On inquiry, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that it was not abrogated, but that it was omitted by mistake. [Qurṭubī]. In this interpretation, it may be summarised that forgetting a verse temporarily, and then remembering it again, does not go against the promise made in this verse. [In fact, it is an exception from this promise.] Allah knows best!

وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرٰى (And We will facilitate for you [to reach] the easiest way....87:8). The phrase 'the easiest way' refers to the sacred laws of Islam. Apparently, according to the demand of the context, it should have been stated 'We will make the Sharī'ah easy for you'. But the Qur'ān chose, instead, to state 'And We will facilitate for you (to reach) the easiest way. [8]'. The reason for that, probably, is to indicate that Allah will predispose him to the sacred laws, so that they will become part of his nature, and he will become an embodiment of Sharī'ah.

فَذَكِّرْ اِنْ نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرٰى (So, extend advice [to people] if advice is useful....87:9) The preceding verses described the facilities created by Allah for the Holy Prophet ﷺ in performing his Prophetic obligation. This verse commands him to perform his obligation. The verse contains the conditional particle '*in*' (if) that apparently makes the sentence a conditional statement. But, in fact, the command is not intended to be made conditional. It is rather an emphatic statement. This is similar to the grammatical phenomenon in many languages. The particle 'if' is sometimes used when something is always true. It is used for introducing a situation that always has the same meaning, result or effect. For example: "If you are a 'man' [obviously he is a man], then you will have to do this work;" In neither of such sentences, the particle 'if' is conditional, but rather emphatic. Likewise, the verse purports to say that preaching truth and righteousness is certainly useful. Therefore, the beneficial thing should never be abandoned at anytime.

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكّٰى (Success is surely achieved by him who purifies himself,..87:14) The word *tazakkā* is derived from *zakāh*, the primitive meaning of which is 'to purify'. The *zakāh* of wealth is so called because it purifies the rest of man's wealth for him. In this context, the word *tazakkā* is used in a general sense, which comprehends the purity of faith and character, and purity of wealth.

وَذَكَرَاسْمَ رَبِّهٖ فَصَلّٰى (and pronounces the name of his Lord, then offers prayer....87:15). This covers all categories of prayer, obligatory as well as supererogatory. Some commentators say that it refers especially to *'Id* prayers. This interpretation too can fall under the preceding category.

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا (But you prefer the worldly life,...87:16). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ says that people generally prefer the worldly blessings and comforts to the blessings and comforts of the Hereafter, because the former is visible and readily available, while the latter is invisible and unavailable readily. People unaware of reality preferred the visible to the invisible, which became the cause of eternal loss. In order to spare them the eternal loss, Allah, through His Messengers and Books, described to them the blessings and comforts of the Hereafter so clearly as if they can perceive them [through their sense organs]. It has been made plain to them that what they think is readily available and preferred, is actually fragile and will very soon perish. It is unwise to put one's heart into, or faith in, it and waste one's energy on it. Thus the Qur'ān says:

وَالْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى (while the Hereafter is much better and much more durable...87:17). The verse purports to warn those who prefer this life to the Hereafter that they should use their intelligence to find out what they have preferred and what they have abandoned. They are, first of all, made to realise that the highest degree of comfort and pleasure in this life is not free from the mixture of grief and hardship. In the second place, it is not permanent. We experience in our daily life that a king of today becomes a pauper tomorrow. A vigorous youth of today becomes old tomorrow. In the Hereafter, on the other hand, there will be freedom from both these defects. All its blessings and comforts will be 'much better' and they cannot be compared to the blessings and comforts of this life. Most importantly, it is *abqa* 'much more durable'.

Let us consider the following scenario: It is said to a person that there are two houses in front of him, one of which is a magnificent mansion, fully furnished and another an ordinary, substandard house, not properly furnished. He has the choice to take the mansion, but only for a month or two. Thereafter, he will have to vacate the mansion. Or he may take the underdeveloped house that he will own permanently. Which of the two houses a wise person will prefer? The answer is obvious that he will prefer the second option. On this analogy, one should prefer the blessings of the

Hereafter even if, for argument's sake, they are substandard, because they are permanent and eternal. But the fact is that they are not only permanent, but also much better and far more superior to the worldly comforts. In this situation only an unfortunate fool will prefer the blessings of this life to the bounties of the Hereafter.

إِنَّ هٰذَا لَفِى الصُّحُفِ الْأُوْلٰى صُحُفِ إِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى (Indeed this is [written] in the earlier divine scripts, the scripts of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā....87:18, 19] In other words, either all the themes of this Sūrah or its last theme, that the Hereafter is much better and much more durable than this life, was written in the earlier Divine scriptures. It is further explicated that this theme was written in the scriptures of Prophets Ibrāhīm and Mūsā عليهما السلام. Probably, it refers to other scriptures that were given to Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام before Torah. It is also possible that it refers to Torah itself.

Themes of the Scripts of Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام

Ājurrī transmits a narration from Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī رضي الله عنه that he inquired from the Prophet ﷺ as to the contents of the scripts of Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and the Holy Prophet ﷺ replied that they contained educating parables . A story is told in it about a tyrant king where he is addressed and told: You haughty, arrogant and oppressive ruler! I did not give you kingdom so that you may amass wealth, but I had given you power so that you may let the supplication of the oppressed against the oppressor reach me, because my law does not reject the supplication of an oppressed, even though it may be uttered by an unbeliever.

Another parable addresses the general public thus: A wise person should divide his time into three parts. One part should be reserved for the worship of his Lord and supplication to Him. The second part should be reserved for self-assessment of his deeds, and reflection on the Omnipotence and creation of Allah. The third part should be allocated for acquisition of livelihood and fulfilling the natural needs. It further imparts that a wise person should keep himself abreast of the circumstances of his time, and keep himself busy in performing his intended work. He should take care of his tongue. He who takes speech as one of his works, his speech will be confined only to the things of real need .

Themes of the Scripts of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ

Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī ؓ says that he then inquired from the Holy Prophet ﷺ as to the contents of the scripts of Prophet Mūsā ؑ and the Holy Prophet ﷺ replied that they contained lessons of wisdom. Some of them are as follows:

- I am surprised at the person who believes that he will certainly die, and yet he is lives happily.
- I am surprised at the person who believes in Divine destiny, and yet he is despondent and aggrieved.
- I am surprised at the person who experiences the vicissitudes of life and rise and fall of nations, and yet he is content with the world.
- I am surprised at the person who believes in the Reckoning of the Hereafter, and yet he abandons [good] deeds.

Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī ؓ says that he asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ whether anything from these scriptures was revealed to him, he replied in the affirmative and asked Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Ghifārī ؓ to recite verses 14-19 of this Sūrah. [Qurṭubī]

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-A'lā
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ghāshiyah
(The Overwhelming Event)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 26 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 26

هَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ ﴿١﴾ وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ﴿٢﴾ عَامِلَةٌ
نَّاصِبَةٌ ﴿٣﴾ تَصْلٰى نَارًا حَامِيَةً ﴿٤﴾ تُسْقٰى مِنْ عَيْنٍ اٰنِيَةٍ ﴿٥﴾ لَيْسَ
لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ اِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيْعٍ ﴿٦﴾ لَّا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِيْ مِنْ جُوْعٍ ﴿٧﴾
وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ نَّاعِمَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ لِّسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾ فِيْ جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿١٠﴾ لَّا
تَسْمَعُ فِيْهَا لَاغِيَةً ﴿١١﴾ فِيْهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فِيْهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوْعَةٌ
﴿١٣﴾ وَّاَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوْعَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾ وَّنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوْفَةٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَّزَرَابِيُّ
مَبْثُوْثَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾ اَفَلَا يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَى الْاِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ﴿١٧﴾ وَاِلَى
السَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ﴿١٨﴾ وَاِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ﴿١٩﴾ وَاِلَى
الْاَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَذَكِّرْ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لَسْتَ
عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيْطِرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلّٰى وَكَفَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللّٰهُ الْعَذَابَ
الْاَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٤﴾ اِنَّ اِلَيْنَآ اِيَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾

Has there come to you the description of the Overwhelming Event? [1] Many faces on that day will be humbled, [2] working hard, exhausted. [3] They will enter

into the scorching fire. [4] They will be made to drink water from a boiling spring. [5] There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant [6] that will neither nourish, nor satisfy hunger. [7] Many faces on that day will be full of glamour, [8] well pleased with their endeavour, [9] in a lofty garden, [10] in which they will not hear any absurd talk. [11] In it there is a running spring. [12] In it there are couches, elevated, [13] and goblets, well placed [14] and cushions, arrayed [15] and carpets, spread around. [16]

So, do they not look at the camels how they are created, [17] and at the sky, how it is raised high, [18] and at the mountains, how they are installed, [19] and at the earth, how it is spread out? [20] So, keep on preaching; you are only a preacher. [21] You are not a taskmaster set up over them, [22] but whoever turns away and disbelieves, [23] Allah will punish him with the greatest torment. [24] Surely towards Us they have to return, [25] then it is Our job to call them to account. [26]

Commentary

وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ. عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ (Many faces on that day will be humbled, working hard, exhausted...88:3). On the Day of Judgement, there will be two separate groups of people, believers and unbelievers, and their faces will be different. This verse describes the faces of the unbelievers. They will be downcast. The word *khāshi'ah* from the root word *khushū'* means 'to humble, humiliate, cast down'. This is the meaning of casting oneself down before Allah in prayer. People who did not cast themselves down before Allah in this world, their faces on the Day of Judgement will be downcast with humiliation and disgrace .

The other conditions of the unbelievers are *'āmilah* and *nāṣibah*. The word *'āmilah* from *'āmal* means 'to work hard' and *'āmil* or *'āmilah* in Arabic is used for 'a person who works continuously, so as to become completely tired'. The word *nāsibah* is derived from *nasab*. This word also refers to 'one who toils unceasingly so as to become totally exhausted'. It seems that the latter two conditions of the unbelievers relate to this world, because Hereafter is not a realm in which one has to work to become so tired and exhausted. Therefore, Qurṭubī and other commentators are of the view that the humbleness of their faces relates to the Hereafter, but their working hard and being exhausted refers to their work in this world. Given this interpretation, the sense is that many unbelievers exert

themselves in their false rituals, and work hard in their presumed acts of worship in the world, as for instance the Hindu Yogis and many Christian monks do. They endure many difficulties in the devotional acts of worship sincerely in order to seek the good pleasure of Allah, but being on wrong and idolatrous ways, they are not acceptable to, or rewarded by, Allah. Thus their faces show signs of exhaustion in this world; and in the Hereafter they will show signs of disgrace and humiliation.

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالیٰ reports that when Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ went to Syria, a Christian monk came to him. He was an old man, and on account of his religious exercises and great endeavours, his face was exhausted, his body was dry and his dressing was miserable. When Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ looked at him, he began to weep. People asked him about the cause of his weeping. He replied: "I pity the condition of this old man. This poor soul worked so hard and showed such readiness to lay down his life to achieve a particular purpose (that is, to gain the pleasure of Allah) but, alas! He could not achieve it. Then he recited the following verse:

وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ. عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ

Many faces on that day will be humbled, 'working hard, exhausted. [88:2-3]'

نَارًا حَامِيَةً (...[the] scorching fire...88:4). The word *ḥāmiyah* literally means 'hot' and 'scorching'. Although this is the natural property of fire that needed no mention, yet the specific reference to this quality of the fire brings out the point that the fire of Hell cannot be compared to the fire of this world. The heat of the fire of this world, some time or the other, is reduced or ends. But the fire of Hell is everlasting and eternal. Its heat will neither reduce nor end.

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيْعٍ (There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant...88:6) The only food available for the inmates of Hell would be *ḍarī'*. In the world, this is a kind of thorny grass that spreads on the ground. No animal goes near it. It is foul-smelling, poisonous and thorny. [As interpreted by 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, and quoted by Qurṭubī].

How will Grass or Tree Survive in Hell

One may ask the question that the grass or trees are among things that burn in fire. How will they survive in Hellfire? The answer is that

the Supreme Creator Who cherished and sustained them in this world with water and air, has the power and ability to make the fire itself the nutrient of these trees, so that they may flourish.

Another question may be raised here. The Qur'ān mentions several things as the food of the inmates of Hell. Here it refers to their food as *ḍarī'*. On another occasion, it refers to *zaqqūm*, and on a third occasion it refers to *ghislīn*. This verse restricts their food to *ḍarī'*, thus: 'There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant...88:6)

The answer is that the restriction in this verse is in contrast to a palatable food that may be fit for [human] consumption. *Ḍarī'* is cited here as an example. The verse means that the inmates of Hell will not get any palatable food. They will get worst, most disgusting and loathsome food like *ḍarī'*. Thus the purpose of mentioning *ḍarī'* is not restriction. In fact, *ḍarī'* includes *zaqqūm* and *ghislīn*. Qurṭubī says that it is possible there will be different levels in Hell, and on different levels there will be different kinds of food. On one level, there will be *ḍarī'* and on another level, *ghislīn*, and so on.

لَايُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِى مِنْ جُوْعٍ (that will neither nourish, nor satisfy hunger...88:7). When the preceding verse was revealed in which it was stated that the inmates of Hell will get food like *ḍarī'*, some of the pagans of Makkah [mockingly] said that their camels eat *ḍarī'* and yet they are fat and healthy. In response to their statement, the following verse of the Qur'ān was revealed which means that they should not compare the *ḍarī'* of this world with that of the Hereafter. The latter will neither provide nutrition, nor satisfy their hunger.

لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيْهَا لَاغِيَةً (in which they will not hear any absurd talk...88:11). It includes the words of disbelief, futile or idle talk, obscene language, calumny or false accusation, or any other talk that hurts people's feelings. On another occasion, the Qur'ān puts it thus:

لَايَسْمَعُوْنَ فِيْهَا لَغْوًا وَّلَا تَأْثِيْمًا

> 'They will hear neither an absurd talk therein, nor something leading to sin, [56:25]

This shows that false accusation and absurd talks are hurtful. That is why the Holy Qur'ān has described it as a blessing to the inmates of Paradise that no such foolish words will come across their ears that may

pollute their hearts.

Etiquette of Living

وَأَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوعَةٌ (and goblets, well placed...88:14) The word *akwāb* is the plural of *kūb* and it refers to a 'goblet', a 'glass' or a cup for drinking water. It has been qualified by the adjective *mauḍū'ah* and it means 'well placed'. This signifies that the glasses or cups or containers will be set in their due places close to water. This description opens an important chapter in setting down some of the rules of correct behaviour in social situations. The drinking containers for water ought to be placed near the water in the designated place. They should not be misplaced so that the other members of the household will have to look for them when they wish to drink water. This situation is irritating. Other household items of daily use, such as cans, glasses, towels, and so on, should be arranged in their designated places, and after using them, they must be kept back in their respective places, so that the other members of the household do not face any difficulty in finding them out. All this is deducible from the word *mauḍū'ah* 'well placed', because Allah has arranged the goblets near the water for the comfort of the inmates of Paradise.

اَفَلَا يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَى الْاِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ (So, do they not look at the camels how they are created...88:17) The Qur'ān first described the conditions of the Hereafter; and it then went on to depict the reward of the believers and the retribution of the unbelievers. Now it turns attention to rebuff the obdurate unbelievers' foolish denial of the Hereafter. They reject it on the ground that after death and decomposition of the body and bones it is inconceivable that they would be recomposed and resurrected. For their guidance, Allah invites their attention to reflect carefully on a few of His Signs. There are uncountable Signs of Allah in the universe. These verses refer to four of them specifically which suited the condition of the desert Arabs. They often travelled through the desert. In such a situation, all they saw were camels they travelled on. They mounted camels and covered long journeys. Above them was the sky and beneath them was the earth. All around them [left, right, front and back] they saw mountains. The Arabs are commanded to ponder over these four natural phenomena which make Allah's might manifest.

Among animals, the camel has certain peculiar characteristics that can be a reflection of Divine wisdom and power. It is the largest, most

robust and durable animal. Although elephant is a much larger animal than the camel, Allah has mentioned the camel rather than the elephant, because the Arabs knew camels and scarcely saw an elephant. Despite the fact that a camel is such a huge animal, a Bedouin Arab will not find it difficult to look after it even if he is poor. If he is unable to gather or afford food for it, it has to be let loose and will gather its own nutriment and live on leaves. It has a long neck to reach the tops of the high trees. The food of elephants and other animals work out expensive. In Arabian deserts, water is a scarce commodity. It is not available everywhere or anytime. Yet it can survive for about a week without water as Allah's Power has provided it with a small narrow-mouthed pouch in its paunch in which it stores up extra water [which it uses up gradually for seven to eight days]. Thus it is a superb draught beast. Nature has created it uniquely, so that it is perfectly adapted to survive the hazards of the harsh climate of the desert.

There is no need to set up a ladder to climb up the high animal. Allah has divided its legs into three levels. Each leg has two knees that it manoeuvres to sit down so that it becomes easier for riders to climb up and down. It is the chief beast of burden in deserts, and as such, it is able to carry large loads. It is most difficult to travel in daytime in Arabia because of scorching sunlight. Allah has made it possible for the camel to keep on travelling the whole night. Camels are so obedient that that even a little child can lead them along anywhere. Camels are very valuable to them in many other ways that teach man that Allah is Omnipotent and has consummate wisdom.

In conclusion of the Chapter, the Messenger of Allah is comforted thus:

لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِم بِمُصَيْطِرٍ (You are not a taskmaster set up over them,....88:22) The Holy Prophet ﷺ is told that he is only a preacher, and as such he must keep on preaching. He should not worry beyond that. It is for Allah to call the unbelievers to Him to render account of their deeds and actions, and punish them accordingly.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ghāshiyah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Fajr
(The Dawn)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 30 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 30

وَالْفَجْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَّالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ
﴿٤﴾ هَلْ فِي ذٰلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حِجْرٍ ﴿٥﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ
﴿٦﴾ إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ﴿٧﴾ الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿٨﴾
وَثَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ ﴿٩﴾ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ ﴿١٠﴾
الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١١﴾ فَأَكْثَرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَصَبَّ
عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ ﴿١٤﴾ فَأَمَّا
الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلٰهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ ﴿١٥﴾
وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلٰهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ ﴿١٦﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ
لَّا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تَحٰضُّونَ عَلٰى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَ
تَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَّمًّا ﴿١٩﴾ وَّتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ كَلَّا
إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ﴿٢١﴾ وَّجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا
﴿٢٢﴾ وَجِايْءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنّٰى لَهُ
الذِّكْرٰى ﴿٢٣﴾ يَقُولُ يٰلَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي ﴿٢٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يُعَذِّبُ

عَذَابَهٗۤ اَحَدٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَّلَا يُوْثِقُ وَثَاقَهٗۤ اَحَدٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ يٰۤاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ
﴿٢٧﴾ ارْجِعِىْۤ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلِىْ فِىْ عِبٰدِىْ
﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلِىْ جَنَّتِىْ ﴿٣٠﴾

I swear by the dawn, [1] and by the Ten Nights, [2] and by the even and the odd, [3] and by the night when it moves away, [4] Is there (not) in that an oath (enough) for a man of sense? [5] Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with (the people) of 'Ād [6] of *Iram*, the men of tall pillars, [7] the like of whom were never created in the lands, [8] and (how He dealt) with (the people of) Thamūd who had carved out the rocks in the Valley (of Qura), [9] and with Fir'aun (the Pharaoh), the man of the stakes, [10] all those who had rebelled in the cities, [11] and spread a lot of mischief therein. [12] So, your Lord unloosed on them the whip of torment. [13] Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. [14] As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me." [15] But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me." [16] No! But you do not honour the orphan, [17] and do not encourage one another to feed the needy. [18] And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp, [19] and love wealth, with an excessive love. [20] No! When the earth will be crushed thoroughly to be turned into bits, [21] and your Lord will come, and the angels as well, lined up in rows, [22] and Jahannam (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward, it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation? [23] He will say, "O Would that I had sent ahead (some good deeds) for (this) my life!" [24] So, that day, no one can punish as He will punish, [25] nor can anyone shackle like He will shackle. [26]

(As for an obedient man, it will be said to him,) "O content soul, [27] come back to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. [28] So, enter among My (special) servants, [29] and enter My Paradise." [30]

Commentary

This Sūrah, by swearing five oaths in its beginning, emphasises the

following fact:

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ

Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. [89:14]

This means that Allah is watching over whatever you do, and reward or punishment for your deeds is certain and inevitable.

The first among the five oaths sworn at the beginning is Fajr (dawn). It may refer to the dawn of every day that brings about a great change in the world, and thus directs man's attention to the absolute Omnipotence of Allah. It is also possible that it refers to the dawn of some specific day. Commentators like Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Zubair ﷺ say that the word is general, and it refers to any dawn. According to another narration of Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, it refers to the dawn of the first of Muḥarram which is the start of the lunar-Islamic calendar. Sayyidnā Qatādah ﷺ, among others, has interpreted it in the same way.

Some commentators, like Mujāhid and 'Ikramah, refer this to the dawn of 'the Day of Sacrifice' on the tenth of Dhul Ḥijjah. A narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ concurs with this view. The reason for this specification is that according to Islamic principles, Allah has made a night to precede the day. All days are preceded by their respective nights, except the 'the Day of Sacrifice', because the night that precedes the Day of Sacrifice is not the night of Sacrifice. In fact, the preceding night, according to Shari'ah, is the night of 'Arafah. Staying at 'Arafāt is the most important and foremost rite of Ḥajj. If a pilgrim is not able to reach 'Arafāt on the 9th of Dhul Ḥijjah, any time in the day or in the night following it to halt there for a while, he will not be considered to have performed Ḥajj at all. However if he arrives there any time during the night before the break of dawn on the 10th of Dhul Ḥijjah, his halt in 'Arafah will be acceptable and his Hajj will be considered valid. This shows that the day of 'Arafah has two nights, one preceding it, and another following it. The Day of Sacrifice [10th of Dhul Ḥijjah] has no night. From this point of view, the dawn of the day of Sacrifice, among all the days of the year, occupies a special position. [Qurṭubī].

Next, it says:

لَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (and by the Ten Nights...89:2) According Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās

ﷺ, Qatādah, Mujāhid, Suddi, Daḥḥāk, Kalbī and other leading commentators, the 'ten nights' refers to the [first] ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah. It is recorded in Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the first ten days of Dhil Hijjah are the most meritorious days for Allah's worship. Every fast of the day is equivalent to fasts of the whole year. Worshipping Allah every night during this period is equivalent to worshipping Him on the night of Qadr. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah with a weak chain of authorities from Abū Hurairah ﷺ- Maẓharī]. Abū-z-Zubair narrated from Sayyidnā Jabir ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said : وَالْفَجْرِ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (I swear by the dawn and by the Ten Nights' refers to the first ten days of Dhul Ḥijjah. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said that these are the ten nights that are mentioned in the story of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ: وَأَتْمَمْنٰهَا بِعَشْرٍ '... then We supplemented them with ten' [7:142]. Thus these are the ten nights in the whole year which are most meritorious. Imām Qurṭubī says that the Ḥadīth reported by Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ indicates that the ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah are most meritorious, and that the same ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah were designated for Prophet Mūsā ﷺ.

وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ (and by the even and the odd,...89:3). The Qur'ān has not specified what the words 'the even' and 'the odd' refer to. Therefore, the commentators have assigned different interpretations to them. Nevertheless, it has been mentioned in a Prophetic Ḥadith narrated by Abū-z-Zubair from Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ thus:

(وَالْفَجْرِ.وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ) هو الصّبح وعشر النحر والوتريوم عرفه والشفع يوم النّحر

'*Fajr*' refers to the dawn, and 'the ten nights' refer to the first ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah [which include the Day of Sacrifice], and that *al-watr* [the odd] refers to the day of '*Arafah* [because it falls on the ninth] and *ash-shaf'* refers to the Day of Sacrifice [because it falls on the 10th day of Dhul Ḥijjah].'

Qurṭubī cites this narration and confirms that its chain of authorities is more authentic than the other tradition narrated by Sayyidnā 'Imrān Ibn Ḥusain ﷺ which talks about odd [three] and even [two/four] units of prayers. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ 'Ikramah and Naḥḥās رحمهما الله تعالیٰ have preferred the view that 'even' refers to the Day of Sacrifice and 'odd' refers to the day of 'Arafah.

Some commentators like Ibn Sīrīn, Masrūq, Abū Ṣāliḥ and Qatādah رحمهما الله تعالیٰ said that 'even' refers to the entire creation, because Allah

has created them in pairs, and thus He says:

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَیْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَیْنِ

'And from everything We have created (a pair of) two kinds [51:49]'

- belief/disbelief, happiness/unhappiness, light/darkness, night/day, cold/heat, sky/earth, human/Jinn and male/female as against all of these pairs, Allah is the only One Being 'odd' that does not have a pair:

هو اللّٰه الاحد الصّمد

'He, is Allah, the One, Besought of all, needing none'

وَالَّیْلِ اِذَا یَسْرِ (and by the night when it moves away...89:4). The word *yasr* is derived from *sarā* and means 'to walk in the night' or 'travel by night'. The verse says when the night itself moves away. It signifies 'when the night departs and goes away.' After taking oath by these five items, the next verse says:

هَلْ فِیْ ذٰلِکَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِیْ حِجْرٍ (Is there [not] in that an oath (enough) for a man of sense?...89:5). An intelligent person is, in a very special style, invited to think and reflect. The word *ḥijr* literally denotes 'to prevent'. The intellect has been called *ḥijr* because it prevents the person from doing which is unbecoming of him – actions or statements. Are these oaths not sufficient for a man possessed of intellect, sound reasoning, understanding and religious discernment? This sentence is in the form of interrogation to awaken man from his slumber. The subject of oaths is implied, though not stated explicitly. The verse purports to say that when man considers into the Majesty of Allah and reflects on the greatness of objects of oaths, it would be confirmed and verified that everyone has to give account of his deeds, and reward and punishment in the Hereafter is sure. In this connection, reference is made to the destruction of three previous nations: [1] the nation of 'Ād; [2] the nation of Thamūd; and [3] the nation of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). 'Ād and Thamūd are two nations whose genealogy link up with Iram. Thus Iram may refer to both, 'Ād as well as Thamūd. Here however with 'Ād only the name Iram is linked for genealogical reasons:

اَلَمْ تَرَ کَیْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّکَ بِعَادٍ. اِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with [the people] 'Ād of Iram, the men of tall pillars...(89:6-7). The word

'Iram' in verse [7] is, grammatically speaking, either *'atf bayān* (syndetic explicative) or *badal* (complement). The purpose of the construction is to specify one of the two tribes of 'Ād. This statement specifies that it refers to *'Ād-ul-'ūlā* (the early generation of 'Ād). A remnant from the former generation is referred to as *'Ād-ul-'Ukhrā,* because they are linked with their great-grand father Iram more closely than *'Ād-ul-'Ukhrā.* Here the Qur'ān refers to the first tribe as 'Ād Iram. In Surah An-Najm, they are described as: عَادَنِ الْأُوْلٰى (the earlier 'Ād,) [53:50]'

They are introduced here by the epithet: ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (the men of tall pillars)

The word *'imād'* and ''*amūd'* means 'pillar'. The people of 'Ād are mentioned as the men of tall pillars because they were very tall in stature. They were a stronger and more powerful people than any other nations. The Qur'ān describes them explicitly, thus:

لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِى الْبِلَادِ (the like of whom were never created in the lands...89:8) The Qur'ān made it clear that this nation was the tallest and the strongest in their physical stature, but the Qur'ān did not state the exact measurement of the people because it was unnecessary [for Qur'ānic purposes]. Therefore, that detail has been left out. Israelite traditions, however, narrate such incredible reports about their stature, height and power that are difficult to believe. It is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and Muqatil that they were six yards or eighteen feet [5.46] tall. This too seems to be derived from Israelite reports. And Allah knows best!

Some commentators say that 'Iram' is the name of the 'paradise' which 'Ād's son Shaddād had built. The epithet 'possessor of tall pillars' [translated above as 'men of tall pillars'] is used for him. The [so-called paradise] was a lofty structure standing on tall pillars built with gold and silver and studded with jewels, gems and other precious stones, so that people may prefer an instant and ready at hand paradise instead of Paradise of the Hereafter. When this magnificent palace was ready for use, and Shaddād, together with the leaders of his kingdom, wanted to enter, Divine punishment overtook them. They, together with the palaces, were completely destroyed. [Qurṭubī]. In this interpretation, the verse refers to a specific punishment which descended upon the paradise built by 'Ād's son Shaddād. In the first interpretation, which the majority of

the commentators prefer, it refers to all the punishments that descended upon the nation of 'Ād.

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِى الْاَوْتَادِ (and with Fir'aun [the Pharaoh], the man of the stakes...89:10). The word *autad* is the plural of *watad* that means 'peg or stake or nail'. Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) is referred to as 'the man of the stakes'. There are several reasons for this. Majority of the commentators hold the view that he was so called because of the brute torture and cruel torment he inflicted on the people. When he was angry with people, he would hammer stakes into the ground and tie them to these, so that they could be tortured; or he would hammer stakes into their hands and feet, as they lay on the ground in the scorching heat of the sun, and leave them to the mercy of snakes and scorpions. Other commentators have recounted a lengthy story about his wife 'Āsiyah. She embraced 'Īmān (the True Faith) and expressed it to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). This angered him and he inflicted on her the same type of brute torture and destroyed her. [Maẓharī].

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ (So, your Lord unloosed on them the whip of torment....89:13). The punishment inflicted upon them as a result of their mischief is referred to here as a 'whip of torment'. It signifies that just as lashes are inflicted across different parts of the body, the torment these nations received was similar to it in that they suffered different kinds of punishment.

اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ (Surely your Lord is ever on the watch....89:14]. The word *mirṣād* or *marṣad* [is derived from the root *raṣada* which means 'to lie in wait or on watch']. Thus it means 'an ambush, or a place of observation; it is usually used for a place where persons have to travel through a pass in which someone is lying in wait to strike them'. The verse purports to say that Allah is ever watching and observing their movements and activities. No one should think that he could escape Divine torment, because all are under His authority and Power, and He may administer His punishment whenever He wills. Some commentators state that this verse is the subject of the five oaths mentioned taken in the first five verses of this Sūrah.

Wealth and Poverty are no Signs of One's Acceptance or Rejection

فَاَمَّا الْاِنْسَانُ اِذَا مَا ابْتَلٰهُ رَبُّهٗ فَاَكْرَمَهٗ وَنَعَّمَهٗ ۙ فَيَقُوْلُ رَبِّىْٓ اَكْرَمَنِ ۭ وَاَمَّآ اِذَا مَا ابْتَلٰهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهٗ ۙ فَيَقُوْلُ رَبِّىْٓ ۚ

اَهَانَنِ (As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me. But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me...89:15-16). The word 'man' here primarily refers to an 'unbelieving man' who may form any thought about Allah as he feels like, but in its general sense, the word may include a Muslim as well who has the same thought as an unbeliever. When Allah gives abundant wealth and good health to such people, the devil puts into their head two false ideas. First, they succumb to their baser instincts; they become haughty and arrogant; and they think that the wealth and health is the result of their superior intellect, personal capability, efforts and achievement. Secondly, they think that they are enjoying a favourable status with Allah. If they did not enjoy the favourable position with Him, they would not have been granted such an abundance of wealth. By the same token, if Allah curtails their sustenance i.e. they suffer some degree of poverty, they regard it as a curse from Allah, and complain that He is humiliating or dishonouring them, while they deserved honour and respect. The unbelievers and idolaters do hold such thoughts and ideas, as the Qur'ān has pointed out on many occasions, but it is regrettable that many Muslims nowadays fall into similar ideas. Allah refutes man's belief by the expression كَلَّا Kallā 'No/never!' The matter is not as he claims. Wealth does not indicate acceptance of a man by Allah, nor does poverty indicate rejection. [For indeed Allah gives wealth to those whom He loves and those whom He does not love. Likewise, He withholds sustenance /wealth from those whom He loves and those whom He does not love.] Often the matter is quite the contrary. Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) claimed godhead and lordship, yet he never suffered from any headache. Some of Prophets ﷺ were sliced, by enemies, into two pieces with a saw. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the poor refugees will enter Paradise forty years before the wealthy *muhājirs* (Immigrants). [Imām Muslim has transmitted it from 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه - Mazharī]. In another narration, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that whomever Allah loves, He keeps him away from the worldly luxuries as people keep away their sickly patients from water. [Aḥmad and Tirmidhī transmitted it on the authority of Qatādah Ibn Nu'mān__ Mazharī].

Spending on the Orphan is not Sufficient. Their respect is also necessary

لَا تُكْرِمُوْنَ الْيَتِيْمَ (No! But you do not honour the orphan....89:17). The

unbelievers are warned, in these verses, against some of their evil character traits. First, as is mentioned in this verse, they do not honour and treat the orphans kindly. The basic objective of the verse is that they deprive them of their rights, and do not spend on them what is due to them, but the expression used is that they do not honour them, probably to indicate that the requirement of Allah's gratitude, and also of humanitarian sense, is not only that the orphans are given their dues by spending wealth on them, but it is also necessary to honour them and treat them kindly. The guardians should not despise and look down upon their wards, and to discriminate them against their own children. This is apparently a rebuff to the unbelievers who think that wealth is an 'honour' and poverty is a 'dishonour'. After refuting their thoughts and ideas with the expression Kallā 'No/ never!', the verse under comment progresses to say *bal* 'But' that they are deprived of sustenance, because they squander it in immoral pursuits, depriving the orphans of their rights in it.

وَلَاتَحٰٓضُّوْنَ عَلٰى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِيْنِ (and do not encourage one another to feed the needy....89:18). This is the second evil trait of the unbelievers. The style of this verse, in condemning the evil trait of the unbelievers, indicates that it is an obligation of the affluent to spend on the poor and indigent from their own wealth. Obviously, the poor are unable to spend owing to lack of means, but they should at least encourage others to feed the needy.

وَتَأْكُلُوْنَ التُّرَاثَ اَكْلًا لَّمًّا (And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp...89:19). The word *lamm* means to 'gather, amass, concentrate the thing'. This is the third evil trait of the unbelievers, and the verse signifies that they devour inheritance with voracious appetites however they can get it, whether by lawful means or unlawful means. They gather them all together to make a sweeping gulp. When someone passes away, they take their own shares, together with the shares of others, regardless of whether the shares belong to orphans, widows or people who are absent. [As a matter of principle,] it is not permitted to mix up lawful and forbidden wealth in any transaction. Here, however, 'inheritance' has been particularly mentioned, probably because having a greedy eye on it and pursuing it are a proof of man's greed and voracity for wealth. He stares at it like a beast of prey waiting for the person to die, and looking for the opportunity to distribute the estate. But an honourable man of

principle and a noble person would not look at the wealth of the deceased with greedy eyes.

وَتُحِبُّوْنَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا (and love wealth, with an excessive love....89:20). The word *jamm* means 'excessive'. This verse refers to the fourth evil trait of the unbelievers. They have an insatiable love for wealth. The word 'excessive' indicates that love of wealth in itself, in a sober sense, is a natural instinct of man. That has not been condemned here. What is denounced is the excessive or insatiable love of wealth. After describing the evil traits of the unbelievers, the passage reverts to the main theme that was emphasised in the earlier part of the Sūrah with five oaths, that is, the punishment of the Hereafter. In this connection, it first mentions the process of the end of the world, and subsequently the establishment of the Day of Resurrection, thus:

كَلَّا اِذَا دُكَّتِ الْاَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا (No! When the earth will be crushed thoroughly to be turned into bits...89:21). The word *dakk* literally means 'to pound or crush a thing into bits and pieces'. This refers to the earthquakes that will crush and ground the mountains to dust. The world will thus be dissolved. This will be the first stage of Resurrection. When this stage of Resurrection ends, the second stage of Resurrection will begin. The word *dakkan* is repeated in order to show that there will be a series of earthquakes before the dissolution of the world.

وَجَآءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا (and your Lord will come, and the angels as well, lined up in rows....89:22) They will arrive in the Plain of Gathering. The words 'your Lord will come' is an allegorical expression. No one, besides Allah, knows the nature of His coming. The words 'and the angels [will arrive] as well, lined up in rows' are clear in meaning.

وَجِایْٓءَ یَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ یَوْمَئِذٍ یَّتَذَکَّرُ الْاِنْسَانُ وَاَنّٰی لَهُ الذِّکْرٰی (and *Jahannam* [Hell], on that day, will be brought forward, it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation?.... 89:23). No one, besides Allah, knows how exactly 'Hell' will be brought forward in the Plain of Gathering. Apparently, 'Hell' which is at the moment beneath the seventh earth will at that moment will flare up, and the oceans become part of the flame. In this way, Hell during the gathering will be in front of all.

یَوْمَئِذٍ یَّتَذَکَّرُ الْاِنْسَانُ وَاَنّٰی لَهُ الذِّکْرٰی (it will be the day when man will realise the

truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation? - 89-23). The word *tadhakkur* in this context means 'to realise'. The unbelievers will realise the errors of their ways in the Hereafter, but it will be too late, because it is this present world where 'Īmān and good deeds benefit the people. The Hereafter is the place only for reckoning and retribution. Man will express his remorse thus:

يَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِىْ قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِىْ (He will say, "O Would that I had sent ahead [some good deeds] for [this] my life!"....89:24). When he faces the torment of disbelief and idolatry on that day of devastation, man will lament that he should have carried out good deeds and refrained from sin in this world to be saved from punishment in the Hereafter. But it will be of no avail. Allah says: 'So, that day, no one can punish like He will punish, nor can anyone shackle like He will shackle....89:26] Having described the torment of the unbelievers, the conclusion of the Sūrah gives cheerful news to the believers that they will be admitted into Paradise. Thus it says:

يٰٓاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ("O contented soul...89:27). Here the soul of the believer is referred to as *nafs muṭma'innah* 'the contented soul'. The word *muṭma'innah* literally means 'calm'. It refers to the soul that is 'peaceful and tranquil' as a result of remembrance and obedience of Allah. When he abandons it, he feels restless. This is probably the same soul as is made pure, through spiritual exercises and discipline, from the evil traits and bad conduct. Obedience of Allah and His remembrance becomes his predisposition. Sharī'ah becomes his nature.

اِرْجِعِىْٓ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ (come back to your Lord....89:28). The words 'come back' indicate that his first place was with his Lord, and now he is commanded to go back to Him. This confirms the narration that the souls of the believers, together with their Book of Deeds, will be in *'illiyīn*. *'Illiyīn* is a place on the seventh heaven in the shade of the Throne of the Most-Merciful Lord. This is the original resting-place of all human souls, from where they are brought out and put into human body. After death, the souls are returned to that place.

رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً (...well-pleased, well-pleasing....89:28). [The true believer's] soul is well-pleased with decrees destined by Allah and His legislative commands, and Allah too is well-pleased with His slave. The slave's being pleased with Allah's decrees and injunctions is a sign that Allah is pleased

with him. Had Allah not been pleased with him, he would not have had the ability to be pleased with Allah's decree. The true believer's soul is pleased even on his death at the moment of death. Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit ﷺ narrated from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as follows:

من احب لقاء الله احبّ اللّٰهُ لقائه، ومن كره لقاء الله كره الله لقائة.

"He who loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him; and he who dislikes to meet Allah, Allah dislikes to meet him."

When Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها heard this, she asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "We will be able to meet Allah only after death, but we do not like death." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "That is not the case. The truth of the matter is that when death approaches a believer, the angels give him the cheerful news of Paradise and Allah's pleasure. This news makes death dearer to him. Likewise, when death approaches an unbeliever, the torment and punishment is presented to him. This situation makes the death a hateful and reprehensible thing to him." [Transmitted by Bukhārī and Muslim - Maẓharī]. In short, the love and hatred for death of the present time is not counted. What counts is [the love of] death, or [the love of] meeting Allah at the time of the extraction of soul [from the physical body] and [the love of] Allah's pleasure. This is the significance of the phrase: "Well-pleased, well-pleasing"

فَادْخُلِىْ فِىْ عِبٰدِىْ (So, enter among My [special] servants...89:29). In other words, the contented soul will be addressed [compassionately], and first asked to enter the fold of righteous and sincere slaves, and then to enter Paradise. This indicates that entry into Paradise depends on their being, first and foremost, in the fold of the righteous believers. Then they will enter Paradise all together. This shows that joining the company of the righteous in this world is a sign that he will enter Paradise with them. Thus Prophet Sulaimān ﷺ prayed:

وَاَدْخِلْنِىْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِىْ عِبَادِكَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ

'...and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous slaves...[27:19]'

Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ prayed:

وَاَلْحِقْنِىْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ

'...and make me join the righteous. [12:101]'

The above supplications indicate that the company of the righteous is such a great blessing that even the Holy Prophets ﷺ cannot do without, as a result they pray for it.

وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي (and enter My Paradise.....89:30]. In this verse, Paradise is attributed to Allah, and Allah said 'My Paradise'. This is a great honour, and indicates that Paradise will not only have all sorts of eternal comfort, but above all it is a place of Allah's pleasure.

The preceding verses describe the reward of the believers in such a manner that on behalf of Allah, the angels will address their souls honourably and in a befitting manner, as in the verses. It is not clear when they will be addressed. Some commentators say that they will be addressed on the Day of Reckoning after the reckoning is over. The context of the verses confirms this. The punishment of the unbelievers was described above. That will take place in the Hereafter after the Judgement has been passed. It is obvious that the believers will be addressed at the same time. Other scholars indicate that the believers will be addressed in this world at the time of death. Many authentic traditions bear testimony to the veracity of this view. Ibn Kathīr, on the other hand, reconciles the apparently conflicting statements thus: Allah will address the soul of the believers twice with these words. Once at the time of death, and again on the Day of Judgement.

Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit's ؓ narration cited earlier supports the view that the address will be at the time of death. In a lengthy narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ, recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "When death approaches a believer, the angels of mercy bring to him a piece of white silk and say: اخرجی راضية مرضيّة الی روح اللّٰه وريحانه 'Come out [from this body], well-pleased and well-pleasing, to Divine mercy and to the eternal comforts of Paradise' [to the end of narration.]" Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ says that one day he recited the verse يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ (O contented soul) in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Abū Bakr ؓ who was present in the assembly, said: "O Allah's Messenger, what a fine address and honour!" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Behold, the angel will address you thus after your death."

A Few Strange Incidents

Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ reports that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ passed

away in Ṭā'if. After the funeral was prepared, a strange bird, the like of which was never seen before, came and entered the body, but no one saw it coming out of it. When it was lowered into the grave for burial, an invisible voice was heard reciting from the side of the grave: يٰٓاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ Everyone looked around, but could not find anyone. Another incident is recorded by Ḥāfiẓ Ṭabarānī in his book Kitāb-ul-'Ajā'ib. He narrates with his chain of authorities, an incident about Fattān Ibn Razīn Abī Hāshim that once they were imprisoned in a Roman city. They were presented before their king. The king was an infidel. He coerced them to adopt his religion, and threatened them that if anyone refuses to comply with his command, he would be beheaded. They were a few people. Three of them feared for their lives, adopted his religion and thus became apostates. The fourth person refused to adopt the king's religion. He was beheaded and his head was thrown into a nearby river. When it was thrown, the head went to the bottom of the river. Later, it emerged from the water and came to the surface. Then it looked at the other three persons, and calling each one of them by name, recited:

يٰٓاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ارْجِعِيْٓ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبٰدِيْ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ ﴿٣٠﴾

"O contented soul, [27] come back to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. [28] So, enter among My (special) servants, [29] and enter My Paradise."[30]

After that it dived back into the water.

This was an unusual incident which everyone witnessed and heard. When the Christians of that place witnessed this, almost all of them embraced Islam which shook up the king's throne. The three persons who had become apostates reverted to Islam. Caliph Abū Ja'far Manṣūr had them all released from their [enemy's] prison.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Fajr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Balad

(The City)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 20 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 20

لَآ اُقْسِمُ بِهٰذَا الْبَلَدِ ﴿۱﴾ وَاَنْتَ حِلٌّۢ بِهٰذَا الْبَلَدِ ﴿۲﴾ وَوَالِدٍ وَّمَا وَلَدَ
﴿۳﴾ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ فِیْ كَبَدٍ ﴿۴﴾ اَیَحْسَبُ اَنْ لَّنْ یَّقْدِرَ عَلَیْهِ
اَحَدٌ ﴿۵﴾ یَقُوْلُ اَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُّبَدًا ﴿۶﴾ اَیَحْسَبُ اَنْ لَّمْ یَرَهٗٓ اَحَدٌ ﴿۷﴾
اَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ عَیْنَیْنِ ﴿۸﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَّشَفَتَیْنِ ﴿۹﴾ وَهَدَیْنٰهُ النَّجْدَیْنِ
﴿۱۰﴾ فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ﴿۱۱﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ﴿۱۲﴾ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ
﴿۱۳﴾ اَوْ اِطْعٰمٌ فِیْ یَوْمٍ ذِیْ مَسْغَبَةٍ ﴿۱۴﴾ یَّتِیْمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿۱۵﴾
اَوْ مِسْكِیْنًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿۱۶﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ
وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ﴿۱۷﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْمَیْمَنَةِ ﴿۱۸﴾ وَالَّذِیْنَ
كَفَرُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَا هُمْ اَصْحٰبُ الْمَشْئَمَةِ ﴿۱۹﴾ عَلَیْهِمْ نَارٌ مُّؤْصَدَةٌ ﴿۲۰﴾

I swear by this city, [1] and (O Holy Prophet,) you are going to be allowed to fight in this city [2] and by the father and that which he begot, [3] Indeed We have created man (to live) in hard struggle. [4] Does he think that no one has power over him? [5] He says, "I have spent a lot of wealth." [6] Does he think that no one has seen him? [7] Did We not make for him two eyes, [8] and a tongue and two lips, [9] and showed him the two

ways? [10] **Yet he did not make his way through the steep course,** [11] **And what may let you know what the steep course is?** [12] **(It is) freeing of the neck of a slave,** [13] **or giving food in a day of hunger** [14] **to an orphan near of kin,** [15] **or to a needy person lying in dust** [16] **then he did not join those who believe and advise each other to be patient and advise each other to be merciful.** [17] **Those are the People of the Right Hand. (i.e.their books of deeds will be given in their right hands)** [18] **As for those who reject Our verses, they are the People of the Left Hand. (i.e. their books of deeds will be given in their left hand.)** [19] **Upon them will be the Fire, enveloping them with closed exits.** [20]

Commentary

لَآ أُقْسِمُ بِهٰذَا الْبَلَدِ (I swear by this city...90:1). The particle *lā* ('no') in the beginning of this sentence has no meaning here. Such particles in Arabic language are commonplace. However, the more appropriate view is that when a Sūrah begins with a *lā* (no) followed by an oath, it was revealed in refutation to a false assumption of the opponents. In other words, Allah is saying, 'No, what you [the unbelievers] are saying or thinking is not correct, but the truth is what We are swearing about...'. The word *al-balad* 'the City' refers to the Holy City of Makkah, as in Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭīn [95:3] where Allah swears an oath 'by this peaceful City [of Makkah] وَهٰذَا الْبَلَدِ الْاَمِيْنِ The adjective attached to the 'City' is 'peaceful'. This shows the superiority and honour of Makkah over other cities. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Adiyy ﷺ reports that when the Holy Prophet of Allah ﷺ was migrating from Makkah to Madīnah, he addressed the city of Makkah and said: "By Allah, you are dearer to Allah than the entire earth. If I was not forced out of this place, I would never have abandoned you." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah vide Maẓharī].

وَاَنْتَ حِلٌّۢ بِهٰذَا الْبَلَدِ (and [O Holy Prophet,] you are going to be allowed to fight in this city....90:2). The word *ḥillun* bears two possibilities: [1] It could be derived from *ḥulūl* which signifies to reside in or to descend on some place. In this sense, *ḥillun* signifies 'a dweller or resident' and the verse purports to say that the city of Makkah itself is sacred, and since Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the inhabitant of this city, it adds to the sanctity, honour and glory of the place. Thus, on account of the Holy Prophet's residing in that city its honour and sanctity has been enhanced and augmented. The second possibility is that it is derived from *ḥillatun*

which means 'the thing the doing of which is lawful'. From this point of view, *ḥillun* could signify one of two things: One that the pagans of Makkah consider it lawful to do the Holy Prophet ﷺ any harm, even to kill him, in this City of Makkah which is so sacred that the doing of harm to a living creature in its precincts, not to say of killing it or hunting it, is strictly forbidden even according to their own belief system . Secondly, this may be a prophecy that the city of Makkah is going to be made lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the sense that fighting in it will be allowed for him for a specified time, and He will alight in this City of Makkah, as it happened on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah. On this occasion, all the injunctions and ordinances of the *ḥaram* were suspended for one day, and it was made lawful to kill the disbelievers. Maẓharī cites three possible meanings, and says that all three of them are equally possible.

وَوَالِدٍ وَّمَا وَلَدَ (and by the father and that which he begot,...90:3) The word *walid* refers to Holy Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام, the father of mankind, and the phrase مَاوَلَدَ 'that which he begot' refers to his children from the inception of the world to the end of the world. Thus this phrase swears an oath by Holy Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام and all his children. The subject of the oath follows next, thus:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ (Indeed We have created man [to live] in hard struggle...90:4) The word *kabad* means 'labour, 'toil' or 'difficulty'. The verse purports to say that man's life is a series of hard and toilsome works. Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says: 'Man was conceived and held in his mother's womb. The mother bore the pangs of birth. The hardship of sucking the mother's milk and the difficulty of weaning. This is followed by seeking livelihood and other necessities of life with hardship. Then he endures hardships and long-suffering of old age, death, grave, resurrection, accountability of deeds before Allah, reward and punishment.' These difficulties and hardships are not confined to man. Other animals too share them. Man has particularly been mentioned in this connection because of his intelligence. The more the power of a creature's intelligence, the higher the degree of his legal obligation. Lastly, the greatest difficulty and hardship would be borne at resurrection and life-after-death, when we will be required to give an account of the deeds we might have done throughout our life. Other species of animals will not be required to do this.

Some scholars say that no creation suffers as much difficulties or hardships as human beings, despite the fact that his body is smaller and weaker than most other animals. Man's brainpower, however, is most powerful. Therefore, he has been specifically mentioned. Swearing an oath by Makkah, 'Ādam عليه السلام and his children, Allah has made it plain that man has been created in difficulties and to endure hardships. This is a proof that man did not come into existence on his own but his Creator is an All-Powerful Being who has, in His wisdom, created every species of creation with specific predisposition and capacity of actions. If man had any part in his own creation, he would never have allowed such difficulties and hardships for himself. [Qurṭubī]

Absolute Comfort, without Hardship, Is not Possible in the World: Man Must be Prepared to Endure Hardships

The oath and its subject makes plain to man that his desire to live peacefully and comfortably in this world, without enduring any hardship, is a silly idea and false notion, which is not possible to happen. Therefore, it is necessary for difficulty, hardship, distress and affliction to befall every person. Since they are bound to befall, a wise person should be in readiness to work hard for something that may help him for an eternal life. The only factor that will help him for this is faith and obedience to the Truth.

Then, after describing a few of the ignorant disbeliever's qualities, the following verse says about an unbeliever: أَيَحْسَبُ أَن لَّمْ يَرَهُۥٓ أَحَدٌ (Does he think that no one has seen him?...90:7) that is, his evil deeds. He should realise that his Creator watches every action of his.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُۥ عَيْنَيْنِ ﴿٨﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿٩﴾ وَهَدَيْنَٰهُ ٱلنَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١٠﴾

(Did We not make for him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips, and showed him the two ways?....90:8-10)

The word *najdain* is the dual form of *najd* which means an elevated or conspicuous road. The word *najdain* signifies the two high and conspicuous ways of good and evil, or of success and destruction. The preceding verse pointed out the ignorance and heedlessness of man. He thinks that Allah has no power over him, and that there is no one watching over his actions. The current verse mentions a few of the organs and abilities that Allah has endowed him with. If he reflects carefully on these endowments, he will appreciate His infinite wisdom and power within himself. He has a pair of eyes. The optic nerves and tissues are

rather delicate. They send nervous impulses to the brain when stimulated by light rays from external objects. The structure of the eye itself is most delicate. Each eye consists of a hollow, spherical capsule [eyeball], made up of several layers and structures. It is set into a socket in the skull, and is protected by eyelids and eyelashes, and eyebrows. It works like an automatic machine. When a harmful object is seen coming from the front, the eyelids close on their own. The eyelashes block the dust from getting into the eyes. The eyebrows help keep things away from falling into the eyes directly from top. The facial bones, especially the orbit [eye socket and the cheek bones], protect the eye, if one were to fall on one's face or something were to fall on the face.

The second gift that man is endowed with is the 'tongue'. This organ - the articulator - is the most amazing and important creation. It is the long piece of flesh fixed to the bottom of the mouth that can represent thoughts of the heart, the automatic and mysterious machine. The heart works in an amazing way. A thought occurs in the heart, the brain interprets it, and prepares appropriate topic and words. The words are uttered by the tongue. Such a complex task is performed so swiftly that the listener does not even realise how many systems have worked before the distinguishable sounds, letters and words were uttered. Nature has equipped man with two lips that play an important role in articulating the different sounds, letters and words. Nature has made the tongue such a swift-working articulator that within half a minute it may utter a word which may take him out from Hell and admit him into Paradise, as the word of faith, or may endear him to his enemy in the world, as by seeking forgiveness of his shortcomings. The same tongue within the same short span of time may take him to Hell, as by uttering the word of disbelief, or may make him his biggest enemy who was previously his closest friend, as by using obscene language against him. The tongue has many benefits as well as many ways of destruction. It is a double-edged sword that can operate against an enemy, and it can also cut one's own throat. Therefore, Allah has kept it covered within the case of two lips. Probably, this is the reason why the pair of lips is mentioned. The Creator Who has endowed man with tongue has equipped him with a pair of lips in order to protect it. Therefore, he should be careful in its use. He should not unsheathe it unnecessarily. Allah has equipped him with a pair of eyes, a pair of lips and a tongue, and has equipped him with the ability to distinguish good from evil and right from wrong, thus:

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوٰىهَا

then inspired it with its [instinct of] evil and piety [91:8]'

Thus in the first instance man receives guidance from his own conscience. This is supported by the guidance of the Holy Prophets عليهم السلام and celestial books that clarify it.

In sum, an ignoramus and heedless person, who denies the power of the Omnipotent, should look into his own being, he would be able to observe His attribute of perfect power and consummate wisdom. He should observe with his two eyes and confess with his tongue. He has been shown the two ways of good and evil; and of right and wrong so that he may choose between the two. Obviously, he should choose the good way. In his make-up, there exists the ability to take either way. All these bounties have not motivated man to attempt the steep course. Then the heedless man is warned that he should reflect on the clear proofs and arguments pertaining to Allah's Omnipotence, pertaining to the Day of Judgement, life after death and Reckoning, and believe in these articles of faith. This faith requires that man should be a source of benefit and comfort to others; he should abstain from hurting them; he should believe in Allah; he should amend his own conduct and think of reforming others also, so that, on the Day of Judgement, he may be among the people of the right hand, the inmates of Paradise, enjoying a happy recompense for what he has done in this life. The unfortunate ones who persistently denied the Truth shall be encircled by the Hell-fire. This theme has been taken up from this point onward to the end of the Sūrah. Failing to do a few of the good deeds have been [selectively] described in a unique style.

فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ﴿١٢﴾

(Yet he did not make his way through the steep course. And what may let you know what the steep course is? ...90:11-12]'

The word *'aqabah* means 'hill, high place or a steep road'. It also refers to a 'low area of land between two hills or mountains, that is, a valley'. *'Aqabah* helps a man in saving himself when pursued by an enemy by ascending the summit of the mountain, or in escaping by descending into the valley. Here the word *'aqabah* refers to obedience and devotion. Just as it saves man from an enemy, righteous deeds save man from the punishment of the Hereafter. The righteous deeds are as follows:

فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ([It is] freeing of the neck of a slave...90:13). This is a great

devotional act [and carries a great reward because] it moulds a man's life.

أَوْ إِطْعٰمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (or giving food in a day of hunger...90:14). Although it is an act of great reward to feed any hungry person, it carries even a greater reward to feed certain people, as follows:

يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾

(to an orphan near of kin, or to a needy person lying in dust....90:15-16)

If an orphaned family member is given food to eat, its reward is two fold, for satisfying the hunger of a hungry person and for maintaining family ties and fulfilling his rights.

فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (in a day of hunger...90:14). It means that feeding him in a day when he is hungry will attract more reward. If an orphan is not a close relative or family member, but he is so poor as to be wallowing in dust, spending on him will yield a greater reward. The poorer the person is, the greater will be the reward for the spender.

Obligations of a Believer

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ (then he did not join those who believe and advise each other to be patient and advise each other to be merciful...90:17). The verse points out that the doing only of good actions mentioned in the foregoing verse is not enough for raising the all round stature of the Muslim community. Good ideals and right principles, combined with continuous and sustained adherence to the path of moral rectitude and teaching of virtues to others, are equally essential for the attainment of the high aim. Thus the verse after 'faith' draws the attention of a believer to his socio-moral obligation to the effect that he ought to teach his other Muslim brothers to be patient and to be merciful. The word *ṣabr* signifies 'to withhold oneself from evil deeds and to act upon good deeds'. The word *marḥamah* signifies 'to show mercy to one another or to empathise with others and abstain from hurting them.' This embraces almost all the injunctions of the entire religion.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Balad
Ends here

Sūrah Ash-Shams

(The Sun)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 15 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 15

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحٰهَا ﴿١﴾ وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلٰهَا ﴿٢﴾ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلّٰهَا ﴿٣﴾
وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشٰهَا ﴿٤﴾ وَالسَّمَآءِ وَمَا بَنٰهَا ﴿٥﴾ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحٰهَا ﴿٦﴾
وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰهَا ﴿٧﴾ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُوْرَهَا وَتَقْوٰهَا ﴿٨﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ
زَكّٰهَا ﴿٩﴾ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا ﴿١٠﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُوْدُ بِطَغْوٰهَآ ﴿١١﴾ إِذِ
انْبَعَثَ أَشْقٰهَا ﴿١٢﴾ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ نَاقَةَ اللّٰهِ وَسُقْيٰهَا ﴿١٣﴾
فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنْۢبِهِمْ فَسَوّٰهَا ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَا يَخَافُ
عُقْبٰهَا ﴿١٥﴾

I swear by the sun and his broad light, [1] and by the moon when she follows him, [2] and by the day when it shows its brightness, [3] and by the night when it envelops him, [4] and by the sky, and the One who built it, [5] and by the earth, and the One who spread it, [6] and by the soul, and the One who made it well, [7] then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety, [8] success is really attained by him who purifies it, [9] and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it. [10] (The People of) Thamud denied the truth because of their transgression, [11] when rose up the one who was most wretched of them. [12] So, the Messenger of Allah said to them, "Be careful of Allah's she-camel and her right to drink."

[13] **But they rejected him and killed her, so their Lord sent eradicating torment upon them, and made it equal for all.** [14] **And He has no fear of its consequence.** [15]

Commentary

Allah swears by the objects and phenomena mentioned in verses [1-7], which gives these creations an added significance and draws man's attention to them. Man ought to reflect on these phenomena and try to appreciate their value and the purpose of their creation. The first oath is taken by:

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحٰهَا (I swear by the sun and his broad light,...91:1). The phrase 'and his broad light' is, though conjoined to 'by the sun' by means of the conjunctive particle 'and', the context indicates that 'broad light' is in adjectival position qualifying *shams* 'the sun', that is to say, 'I swear by the sun when it is in the time of forenoon. The word *duha* is that part of the day when the sun rises [early in the morning] and goes up slightly higher [on the sky], and its light spreads on the earth. Man observes it to be near to himself and observes it fully on account of lack of heat.

The second oath is taken by:

وَالْقَمَرِ اِذَا تَلٰهَا (and by the moon when she follows him,...91:2). This signifies one of two things: [1] The moon following the sun is seen clearly during the middle of the lunar months when the full moon rises to dominate the sky with its radiance after sunset. [2] The phrase 'when she follows him' could signify just as the sun is seen in full in broad light, so does the moon, following the sun, becomes full. The third oath is taken by:

وَالنَّهَارِ اِذَا جَلّٰهَا (and by the day when it shows its brightness...91:3). The attached pronoun *hā* 'its' may possibly refer to the earth or the world, although neither of the nouns precedes it. Such usage in Arabic is commonplace, especially if the phenomenon, such as the earth or the world, with which man is generally familiar. In such a case Arabs commonly refer to the phenomenon simply by using a pronoun without making prior reference to it. The addressee understands the meaning by implication. The Qur'ān has many examples of, and bears ample testimony to, this grammatical phenomenon. The verse thus signifies 'by the day and by the world or the earth which the day has brightened up'. In other words, 'by the day when it is fully bright'. Another possibility, which is more pertinent to the context, is that the pronoun 'its' refers to the 'sun' in which case it signifies 'by the day when it brightens up the

sun'. This relation of attribution, in this case, would be a metaphorical relationship. Although the sun is usually understood to be the cause of the day to come out, here the day is said to brighten up the sun. Thus the verse would signify 'when the sun is seen brightened up because the day is out'.

The fourth oath is taken thus:

وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا يَغْشٰهَا (and by the night when it envelops him,...91:4). In other words, when it [the night] sets in, the brightness of the sun is concealed [and only darkness prevails].

The fifth oath is:

وَالسَّمَآءِ وَمَا بَنٰهَا (and by the sky, and the One who built it...91:5). Most clearly the context suggests that the *mā* may be taken as infinitival particle [*masdariyyah*], signifying 'by the sky and its make ' as elsewhere in the Qur'ān غَفَرَلِى رَبِّى '...how my Lord has forgiven me [36:27]'[(1)]

The sixth oath is:

وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا طَحٰهَا (and by the earth, and the One who spread it...91:6). The *mā* in this phrase too stands for *maṣdariyyah* or infinitival particle, signifying 'by the earth and its expanse'. The word *ṭaḥwun* means 'to spread'. Thus in the two verses above attention has been focused on the great Designer and Architect of the sky and earth [that is, the universe], and on the perfection and complete freedom from flaw or defect in the design and creation of the universe. Sayyidnā Qatādah ﷺ and others reported this interpretation. Kashshāf, Baiḍāwī and Qurṭubī preferred this interpretation. Some of the commentators have taken *mā* in the sense of man 'the One Who' and refer it to 'Allah', signifying 'by the sky and its Maker and by the earth and One who spreads it. Thus far, all the oaths were taken by the created objects and phenomena. In between is taken oath by Allah. And Allah knows best! The seventh oath is taken thus:

وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰىهَا (and by the soul, and the One who made it well,...91:7) If, in this phrase, the particle *mā* is taken to function as infinitival particle, it signifies 'by the human soul and its perfection'. If *mā* is taken in the sense of *man* (مَن), it signifies 'by the soul and the One who proportioned it'. The

1. It should be kept in mind that the translation of the text is not based on this construction. It is based on taking '*mā*' as *mousulah* in the sense of 'the one' as adopted by Maulānā Thanawī, and explained by the author in the following verse.

(Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

word *taswiyah* means, to proportion, balance, perfect. The meaning of this word has been explained in the previous Sūrah.

فَاَلْهَمَهَا فُجُوْرَهَا وَتَقْوٰىهَا (then inspired it with its [instincts of] evil and piety...91:8) The word *ilhām* denotes 'to cast into the heart'. The word *fujūr* denotes 'open transgression'. The meaning of *taqwā* is well-known. This sentence is linked with the seventh oath وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰىهَا 'and by the soul, and the One who made it well, [91:7]', signifying that Allah has equipped man with human soul which has the capacity to distinguish between good and bad, and right and wrong. In other words, in his make-up Allah has built in him a special ability to choose freely the righteous path or the sinful path. Whichever way he takes out of his own free will, he will be rewarded or punished. This interpretation is deducible from a traceable Ḥadīth which is transmitted by Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Imrān Ibn Ḥuṣain ﷺ. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the company of his followers. They asked him a question regarding Divine Destination. In response, the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse. This verse will allay the doubt about Divine Destination only if the words 'then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety, [91:8]' are taken in the sense that human soul has been inspired with conscience to distinguish between right and wrong, and has also been granted the ability to do good as well as the ability to commit sin. Man is not a creature of pure force or coercion. He has free will to choose his path of good or evil. He, in fact, has the option to do good or refrain from sin. The choice is his, for which he is rewarded or punished.

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah and Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ report that whenever the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verses [91:7-8] under comment would stop and recite the following supplication aloud:

اللّٰهُمَّ اٰتِ نَفْسِىْ تَقْوٰىهَا اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلاَهَا وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰىهَا

'O Allah! Give my soul its good. You are its Guardian and Master, and the best to purify it.'

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰىهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰىهَا (success is really attained by him who purifies it, and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it....91:10). This is the subject of the seven oaths. The primitive meaning of *tazkiyah* is 'inner cleanliness', signifying 'he who obeyed Allah and purified his inner and outer selves.' Verse [10] signifies 'he who caused his soul to sink in the swamp of sins will be deprived'. The word *dassa* is derived from the basic word *dass'* which denotes 'to bury in the ground' as for instance it

occurs elsewhere in the Qur'ān, thus:

اَمْ يَدُسُّهٗ فِى التُّرَابِ

'...or put it away into the dust? [16:59]'

Some of the commentators have analysed that the pronouns of *zakka* 'He purified' and *dassa* 'He caused to pollute' as referring to 'Allah', signifying that 'he is successful indeed whose soul Allah has purified and he has failed whose soul Allah pollutes '. This verse has divided the entire mankind into two groups: [1] successful; and [2]nsuccessful. An example of the second group has been cited to show how it rejected the message of Allah and consequently how Allah destroyed them. Such a group will receive severe punishment in the Hereafter. Sometimes, however, an instalment of punishment is meted out to them in this world as in the case of Thamūd. Their story is recounted fully in Sūrah A'rāf [S.7:73-79; S.11:61-68; S. 26:141-159; S.27:45-53; S..41:17-18; S.54:23-32; and S. 69:4-5]. Here a brief reference is made to that story and their punishment.

فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنْبِهِمْ فَسَوّٰىهَا (... so their Lord sent eradicating torment upon them, and made it equal for all. And He has no fear of its consequence....91:14-15). The word *damdama* refers to such tormenting scourge as is unleashed on a person or a nation again and again, until it destroys or crushes them completely. *Fa-sawwāhā* signifies that the scourge overtook the entire nation, men, women, children, and young and old.

In conclusion, the verse says: وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبٰهَا 'Allah has no fear of its consequence'. It means that Divine torment that destroys a nation completely cannot be compared to the torment inflicted by the greatest king of this world, because a tyrant king who destroys his people on a large scale, fears for his life, lest the survivors or the supporters of the people destroyed should revenge on him and rebel against him. Whoever destroys others is himself in danger of avenge. Those who attack others must necessarily bear the brunt of counter-attack except Allah. When a people incur Divine punishment and are thus destroyed, Allah has no fear from any one.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ash-Shams
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Lail

(The Night)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 21 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 21

وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا يَغْشٰى ﴿١﴾ وَالنَّهَارِ اِذَا تَجَلّٰى ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ
وَالْاُنْثٰٓى ﴿٣﴾ اِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتّٰى ﴿٤﴾ فَاَمَّا مَنْ اَعْطٰى وَاتَّقٰى ﴿٥﴾
وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنٰى ﴿٦﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهٗ لِلْيُسْرٰى ﴿٧﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْۢ بَخِلَ
وَاسْتَغْنٰى ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنٰى ﴿٩﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهٗ لِلْعُسْرٰى ﴿١٠﴾
وَمَا يُغْنِيْ عَنْهُ مَالُهٗٓ اِذَا تَرَدّٰى ﴿١١﴾ اِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدٰى ﴿١٢﴾ وَاِنَّ لَنَا
لَلْاٰخِرَةَ وَالْاُوْلٰى ﴿١٣﴾ فَاَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظّٰى ﴿١٤﴾ لَا يَصْلٰىهَآ اِلَّا
الْاَشْقَى ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِيْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلّٰى ﴿١٦﴾ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْاَتْقَى ﴿١٧﴾
الَّذِيْ يُؤْتِيْ مَالَهٗ يَتَزَكّٰى ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا لِاَحَدٍ عِنْدَهٗ مِنْ نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزٰٓى ﴿١٩﴾
اِلَّا ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْاَعْلٰى ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضٰى ﴿٢١﴾

I swear by the night when it covers (the sun), [1] and by the day when it is unveiled, [2] and by the One who created the male and the female, [3] your efforts are diverse: [4] As for the one who gives (in charity) and fears Allah, [5] and believes in the best (religion), [6] We will facilitate for him the way to extreme ease (i.e. the comforts of Paradise). [7] But the one who is miser and deems himself self-sufficient, [8] and rejects the best

(religion), [9] for him We will facilitate the way to extreme distress. [10] And his wealth will not help him when he will fall down (into Hell). [11] Of course, it is undertaken by Us to guide, [12] and in Our control is the Hereafter and the worldly life. [13] So I have warned you of a blazing fire. [14] None will enter it but the wretched one [15] who rejected (the truth) and turned away (from it). [16] And saved from it will be the most God-fearing one, [17] who gives his wealth (in charity) to become purified, [18] while no one has conferred any favour on him for which he would give a return, [19] but (he gave his wealth in charity) only to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High. [20] And surely he will soon be happy. [21]

Commentary

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتّٰى (your efforts are diverse....92:4). This statement is like the statement in Sūrah Inshiqāq, verse [6]:

إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا

'O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord. [84:6]'

which has already been explained in that Sūrah. The sense is that man, by his nature, is used to making efforts for one objective or another. But the nature and the results of these efforts are different. Some people work hard for an objective that brings eternal happiness to them, and others work hard for an objective that makes them suffer eternal perdition. It is reported in a Tradition that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Each morning when a man gets up, he goes to conduct his business and keeps himself busy. His business is either successful and emancipates himself from Hell, or unsuccessful and his efforts become the cause of his destruction." Therefore, a wise person should first apply his mind to think whether his efforts will pay dividends, and he should never undertake those efforts that bring about temporary comfort and pleasure, but eternal perdition and grief.

The Two Diverse Types of Human Efforts Divide Humankind into Two Groups

The Qur'ān further shows that, broadly speaking, the humankind may be divided into two opposing groups in terms of their opposing efforts. Each of the two groups are characterised by three qualities. The

first group is a successful one, and its three characteristics are: [1] they give in charity in the cause of Allah; [2] fear Allah and avoid violating the injunctions of Allah in every aspect of life; and [3] believe in the 'best word'. The 'best words' refer to the credo of 'there is no god but Allah' [as Ibn 'Abbās, Ḍaḥḥāk ﷺ have explained]. Testifying to the *kalimah* signifies 'to profess the True Faith'. Faith or belief is the essence of all actions, and comes first in order of rank, but on this occasion, it is mentioned last, probably because the main theme in this context is that of physical exertion, efforts and actions. 'Īmān or faith, on the other hand, pertains to the heart. It signifies the acceptance and confirmation of Allah and His Messenger with one's heart. Confession of this must be made by means of reciting *kalīmah shahādah* 'testimony of faith'. Obviously, none of these things involve physical exertion or effort, nor are they generally counted as actions.

The second group is [the unsuccessful one] and its three characteristics are: [1] they are misers to such an extent that they even fail to pay the *zakāh* and other obligatory alms; [2] they deem themselves self-sufficient rather than obeying Allah; and [3] they reject the 'best word' [that is, the *kalīmah* of *'Īmān*]. Referring to the first group, the verse says:

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهٗ لِلْيُسْرٰى (We will facilitate for him the way to extreme ease [i.e. the comforts of Paradise]....92:7). The word *yusrā* literally denotes 'ease and comfort' or a thing in which there is no difficulty, but here it refers to "Paradise"'. Likewise, referring to the second group it says:

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهٗ لِلْعُسْرٰى (for him We will facilitate the way to extreme distress...92:10). The opposite of *yusrā* is *'usrā* which literally denotes 'extreme distress, referring to "Hell"'. The two statements signify that those who exert their efforts in the first three acts, that is, spending in the cause of Allah, fearing Allah and testifying to the *kalimah*, Allah will pave their way to extreme ease, that is, to deeds that will lead them to the comforts of Paradise. On the other hand, those who exert their efforts in the latter three acts, Allah will pave their way to extreme distress, that is, make easy for them to perform deeds that will lead them to Hell. By right, here it should have been said that the deeds of Paradise or Hell are made easy for them, because 'easy' or 'difficult' qualify deeds, and not persons or people. But the Qur'ān says that the people or the people themselves

will be made easy to do the deeds. This probably implies that the first group will be predisposed to behave in a particular way that behaving otherwise will make them feel uneasy. The second group will be predisposed to behave in a way that will make them feel comfortable to do deeds of Hell, and they will feel uneasy doing deeds of Paradise. Each of these two groups will have their own nature and predisposition, and will find it easier to behave in that particular way. A Ḥadīth confirms that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

اعملوا فكل ميسرلما خلق له‘ امّا من كان من اهل السّعادة فييسّر لعمل السّعادة‘ وامّا من كان من اهل الشّقاوة فييسّر لعمل اهل الشقاوة

"Perform deeds, for everyone will have the deeds of what he was created for [Paradise or Hell] made easy for him. Those people who are the people of happiness, they will have the deeds of the people of happiness made easy for them. And those who are the people of misery, they will have the deeds of the people of misery made easy for them."

But both these things are the results of the use of the God-given choice and free will. Therefore, man is rewarded or punished.

Thereafter the unfortunate inmates of Hell are warned, thus:

وَمَايُغۡنِى عَنۡهُ مَالُهٗ‘ اِذَا تَرَدّٰى (And his wealth will not help him when he will fall down...92:11). The word *taraddā* literally denotes 'to fall into a pit and perish'. The expression 'When he fall' signifies that when Divine decree regarding his destruction comes into operation, nothing - not even his wealth - will save him, whether in grave after his death, or on the Day of Judgement, when he will be falling into the abyss of Hell.

لَايَصۡلٰىهَآ اِلاَّ الۡاَشۡقَى. الَّذِىۡ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلّٰى (None will enter it but the wretched one who rejected [the truth] and turned away....92:16). This describes the fire of Hell. It is quite clear that only a *kāfir* will reject Allah and His Messenger. Apparently, it seems that a sinful believer who does not reject the truth will not enter Hell, whereas the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth are replete with clear texts that a sinful believer will enter Hell, unless he had repented, or someone interceded for him, or was forgiven out of pure Grace. He will abide in Hell until he has received punishment for the sins he has committed. After paying for his sins, he will be taken out of Hell, and through the blessings of his faith, he will be admitted into Paradise.

Apparently, the wordings of the verse are contrary to this interpretation. Therefore, it is necessary that the interpretation of the verse under comment be brought in line with other Qur'ānic verses and authentic Aḥādīth. Its plain and simple interpretation would be that this verse refers to entering the Hell for good, which is peculiar to the unbelievers. They will be tortured eternally in the Hell-fire. The sinful believers, on the other hand, will receive punishment for their sins and will eventually - at some time or the other - be taken out of Hell. Other scholars of Tafsīr have given some other interpretations too, which can also be appropriate. Tafsīr Maẓharī has come up with another explanation according to which 'the wretched one' and 'the most God-fearing one' should not be taken in its general sense. Both words refer particularly to people who lived during the blessed time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. From amongst them, no Muslim, who lived at that time, will enter Hell through the blessings of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ company, even though he might have committed some sins incidentally.

All of The Blessed Companions will be Saved from the Ordeal of Hell

The reason for this is that the Companions rarely ever committed sins. Furthermore, even if they did commit sins, they must have repented by dint of the fear of the Hereafter - as their living conditions indicate . If any of them committed a sin, his good deeds are so many that they can wipe out the sin as the Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ

'...Surely good deeds erase bad deeds_[11:114]'

Adopting the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is an act that can outweigh all other good deeds. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said regarding the righteous members of the community:

هم قوم لايشقىٰ جليسهم ولايخاف انيسهم

'The one who sits with them is never deprived, and the one who feels happy in their company is never unsuccessful.' [Ṣaḥīḥain]

Obviously, a person who sits in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and is his intimate associate cannot be wretched. Therefore, there are express texts available in the authentic Traditions that all the noble

Companions are safe from the punishment of Hell. The Qur'ān itself bears testimony that -

وَكُلًّا وَّعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْحُسْنٰى

'...and to each Allah has promised good [4:95]'

Ḥusnā in this statement refers to 'Paradise'. In another verse, the Qur'ān says:

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنٰى ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُوْنَ

Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept far away from it. [21:101]

Ḥusnā in this statement also refers to 'Paradise'. The pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'from it' refers to 'Hell', signifying that they will be far away from Hell. A Tradition says that 'Hell-Fire will not touch him who has seen me'. [Tirmidhī transmitted it from Jābir ﷺ].

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْاَتْقَى. الَّذِىْ يُؤْتِىْ مَالَهٗ يَتَزَكّٰى (And saved from it will be the most God-fearing one who gives his wealth [in charity] to become purified,....92:17-18). This verse describes the reward of the most God-fearing person, as opposed to the punishment of the most wretched in the preceding verse. The word *atqā* is the superlative form and signifies a man of *taqwā*, that is, the most God-fearing person, who spends his wealth in obedience of his Lord in order to purify himself from sins, will be kept far away from the fire of Hell.

The wordings of the verse give good news, in general, to anyone who spends in Allah's cause in a state of faith, but the occasion of revelation indicates that *atqa* refers to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddiq ﷺ in particular. Ibn Abī Ḥātim reports from Sayyidnā 'Urwah ﷺ that seven Muslims had been enslaved by the Makkan disbelievers. When they became Muslims, they were persecuted in a variety of ways. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ spent a great amount of his money, and purchased them and set them free. Verses [17-21] were revealed on this occasion. [Maẓharī]

وَمَا لِاَحَدٍ عِنْدَهٗ مِنْ نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزٰى (while no one has conferred any favour on him for which he would give a return,...92:19) Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ did this great favour by spending abundant wealth. The emancipated slaves had not done him any favour in the past, so that one could say that he was

returning their favour. He took this step for one purpose only as the verse says:

اِلَّا ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْاَعْلٰى (but [he gave his wealth in charity] only to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High....92:20). Mustadrak of Hakim records that it was a usual practice of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ that he used to purchase Muslim slaves from the disbelievers and set them free whenever he found them in their bondage. Generally, these people were weak and helpless. Abū Qaḥāfah, the father of Abū Bakr ﷺ, said to him: "Since you are emancipating slaves, why do you not set free strong and brave people, so that they may assist you in fighting the enemies and protect you." He replied: "My purpose of emancipating them is not to expect any benefit in return. My only purpose is to seek the pleasure of Allah." [Maẓharī]

وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضٰى (And surely he will soon be happy...92:21). Whoever spends in Allah's way with pure and good intentions of pleasing Allah, and not for any personal worldly gains, will acquire the pleasure of Allah in the Hereafter by achieving the wonderful and eternal blessings of Paradise. It is confirmed that these verses were revealed about Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ. Therefore, this last verse of the Sūrah is a great and splendid news and honour for him given in this very world by Allah.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Lail
Ends here

Sūrah Aḍ-Ḍuḥā

(The Forenoon)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 11 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

١ وَالضُّحٰى ﴿١﴾ وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا سَجٰى ﴿٢﴾ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلٰى ﴿٣﴾
وَلَلْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْاُوْلٰى ﴿٤﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيْكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضٰى
﴿٥﴾ اَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيْمًا فَاٰوٰى ﴿٦﴾ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَآلًّا فَهَدٰى ﴿٧﴾
وَوَجَدَكَ عَآئِلًا فَاَغْنٰى ﴿٨﴾ فَاَمَّا الْيَتِيْمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾ وَاَمَّا السَّآئِلَ
فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ﴿١٠﴾ وَاَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١١﴾

I swear by the forenoon, [1] and by the night when it becomes peaceful, [2] your Lord (O Holy Prophet,) has neither forsaken you, nor has become displeased. [3] And the Hereafter is much better for you than the present life. [4] And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased. [5] Did He not find you an orphan, and give you shelter? [6] And He found you unaware of the way (the Shari'ah), then He guided you. [7] and He found you in need, then made you need-free. [8] Therefore, as for orphan, do not oppress him, [9] and as for the beggar, do not scold him. [10] And about the bounty of your Lord, do talk. [11]

Commentary

Occasion of Revelation

Bukhārī, Muslim and Tirmidhī have narrated from Sayyidnā Jundub

ﷺ that once a finger of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was wounded and started bleeding, he said:

ان انت الّا اصبع دميت......وفى سبيل اللّه مالقيت

'You are merely a finger that is bleeding; [what does it matter] if you are hurt: it all happened in Allah's cause.'

Sayyidnā Jundub ﷺ narrated this incident and said that revelation of the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to a halt, and that Jibrā'il ﷺ stopped coming to him for a while. The unbelievers taunted, saying: "Muḥammad's Lord has forsaken him, and is displeased with him." Sūrah Aḍ-Ḍuḥā was revealed on this occasion. According to the narration in Bukhari by Sayyidnā Jundub ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was unable to wake up for a few nights for *tahajjud* prayer owing to illness. In this narration, there is no mention of 'delay in revelation'. In Timidhī's narration, there is mention about the 'delay in revelation' but no mention about his inability to wake up for *tahajjud* prayer. These reports are not conflicting. The narrator might have narrated one incident at one time, and reported another incident at another time. The lady who taunted the Holy Prophet ﷺ was Umm Jamīl, the wife of Abū Lahab, as other reports indicate. 'Delay in revelation' took place twice. Once in the very early stage of the call. This is known as *fatrah al-waḥy* 'temporary break in the revelation'. This was the longest period. Another narration states that when the pagans or the Jews asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the soul, he promised them that he would give them a reply the next day. However, he forgot to add *insha 'Allah* (if Allah wills). As a result, revelation ceased for a few days. The pagans began to taunt the Holy Messenger ﷺ, saying that Allah had abandoned him, and is displeased with him. It was on this occasion that the Sūrah was revealed.

وَلَلْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْاُوْلٰى (And the Hereafter is much better for you than the present life....93:4). The word *'ākhirah* may be taken in its popular sense of the 'Hereafter' and its opposite *'ūlā* may be taken in the sense of the present 'world'. With these words, Allah tells the Holy Prophet ﷺ not to be disturbed by the taunts of the pagans, because they will see in this world that their assumptions and accusations were absolutely false. In the Hereafter, he will be blessed with Divine favours to his heart's content -

much more than what he will receive in this fleeting world. The word *'ākhirah* may also be taken in its primitive sense i.e. 'the later state or condition' as opposed to *'ūlā* 'the former state or condition'. The verse, in this case, would mean that every succeeding moment of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ life is better than the preceding one. It includes progress in knowledge and wisdom, as well as in degrees of his nearness to Allah, and it also includes progress in economic and political fields.

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضٰى (And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased....93:5). Allah does not specify here what he will give him. The statement is open and general. The Holy Prophet ﷺ will be granted everything he desires so much that he will be pleased. Among his desired thing is the progress of Islam; the general spread of Islam in the world; fulfilment of every need of the Ummah; triumph of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself over his enemies and raising the word of Allah in the land of the enemy. When this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذًا لَّا أَرْضٰى وَ وَاحِدٌ مِّنْ أُمَّتِىْ فِى النَّارِ

> 'If that is the case, then I will not be pleased as long as one [single member] of my Ummah [remains] in Fire.' [Qurṭubī].

In a narration by Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah will accept my intercession for my Ummah [community]. Allah will ask: رضيت يامحمد 'O Muḥammad, are you pleased?'" He will reply: يَارَبِّ رَضِيْتُ "My Lord, I am pleased." Muslim records from Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn-ul-'Āṣ to the effect that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited a verse concerning the Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام:

فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِىْ فَإِنَّهٗ مِنِّىْ وَمَنْ عَصَانِىْ فَإِنَّكَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ

> '...So, one who follows me is surely mine, and the one who disobeys me, then You are Most Forgiving, Very Merciful. [14:36]'

Then he recited a verse which contains the words of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام

إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ

'If You punish them, then, they are Your slaves [5:118]'

Then he raised his hands, he wept and prayed:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اُمَّتِیْ اُمَّتِیْ

'O Allah, my *ummah,* my *ummah!*'

Allah sent Jibra'īl ﷺ to inquire as to why he was weeping [while Allah knows the reason]. Jibrā'il Amīn ﷺ came and inquired why he was weeping. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "I seek my *ummah's* forgiveness." Allah sent Jibra'īl ﷺ back to inform him that He has pardoned them, and that Allah would please him and would not displease him regarding his *ummah.*

In response to the unbelievers' taunts, it was briefly mentioned that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has already been blessed with many Divine favours. The Sūrah elaborates on three of them in particular.

Favour [1]

اَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيْمًا فَاٰوٰى (Did He not find you an orphan, and give you shelter?...93:6). The Holy Prophet ﷺ was an orphan. His father died before he was born, leaving no wealth or property to look after him. The words 'and gave you shelter' signify that the Holy Prophet ﷺ received such deep love and affection from his grand-father, 'Abd-ul-Muṭṭalib, and after him from his uncle, Abū Ṭālib , who took care of him more than their own children.

Favour [2]

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَآلًّا فَهَدٰى (And He found you unaware of the way [the Sharī'ah], then He guided you....93:7). The word *ḍāll* has two meanings: [1] stray; and [2] unaware. Here it stands for the second meaning. The verse signifies that before Muḥammad ﷺ was commissioned as the Prophet, he was unaware of Divine Sharī'ah. He was granted the status of the Prophet ﷺ and thus was guided.

Favour [3]

وَوَجَدَكَ عَآئِلًا فَاَغْنٰى (and He found you in need, then made you need-free....93:8). The word *'ā'il* is derived from *'ailah* which means 'to be in need'. The verse signifies that Allah found him impoverished and enriched him. This happened in the beginning through a business partnership with Sayyidah Khadījah al-Kubrā رضی اللہ عنہا, then once she became his wife and 'Mother of the Faithful', her entire wealth was

devoted to his service.

After elaborating on the three favours of Allah, three injunctions follow:

Injunction [1]

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ (Therefore, as for orphan, do not oppress him,...93:9). The word *qahr* means 'to treat people who are less powerful in an unfair and cruel way'. In the present context, the verse means: 'Since you were a poor orphan, and Allah sheltered you, do not oppress the orphan.' [In words, 'do not seize their wealth by force and squander it. Do not scorn them, humiliate them or despise them. Rather, you should be kind and gentle to them.'] As a result, the Holy Prophet ﷺ emphasised that the orphan be treated kindly and gently, and has forbidden any hurting attitude towards them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the best house of a Muslim is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated kindly, and with love and affection. The worst house is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated badly. [This is transmitted by Bukhārī in Al-Adab-ul- Mufrad, and by Ibn Mājah and Baghawī, as quoted by Maẓharī].

Injunction [2]

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ (and as for the beggar, do not scold him....93:10). The verb *tanhar* is derived from *nahr* which means 'to scold'. The word *sā'il* means 'one who asks'. It includes a person who asks people's wealth, that is, a beggar, and it also includes the one who asks a question of knowledge, that is, an academic investigator. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has forbidden to berate either of them. The best course of action is to give the beggar something. If one is unable to give a beggar anything, one should at least apologise to him politely [so as not to give him any further grief]. Likewise, anyone who is searching knowledge and asks questions, it is forbidden to respond to him harshly and unkindly. The teacher should reply kindly and politely. However, if the investigator is unreasonable in his approach, it is permissible to scold him to the degree that is necessary.

Injunction [3]

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ (And about the bounty of your Lord, do talk....93:11). The verb *ḥaddith* is derived from *taḥdīth* which means 'to talk' meaning,

'just as you were poor and needy, and Allah made you wealthy, then talk about Allah's favours upon you'. Talking about Divine favours to people is one way of thanking Allah. If a person has done something good to another, he should be thanked. Therefore, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Whoever is not thankful to people on their favours is not thankful to Allah." [This is transmitted by Aḥmad. The chain of authorities are reliable - vide Maẓharī].

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Whoever has done good to you, you ought to return the good. If you are unable to return the pecuniary good, then praise him in public, because he who praises people in public fulfils his moral obligation." [Al-Baghawī transmitted it from Jābir Ibn 'Abdullah, vide Maẓharī].

Ruling

It is obligatory to offer gratitude to Allah on every favour He has bestowed. (But the way of offering gratitude may be different.) If Allah has granted a person wealth, a part of that wealth may be spent with the sincerity in Allah's way. If Allah has given a person strong body, his bodily strength may be utilised in fulfilling Divine obligations. If Allah has granted a person Divine knowledge, he should impart it to others. [Maẓharī].

Ruling

It is *sunnah* to recite *takbīr* at the beginning of every Sūrah from Sūrah Ḍuḥā to the end of the Qur'ān. The wordings of the *takbir,* according to Shaikh Ṣāliḥ al-Miṣrī, are as follows:

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَاللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ

> 'There is no god except Allah and Allah is the greatest' [Maẓharī].

According to Ibn Kathīr, the *takbir* may be recited at the end of every Sūrah and, according to Baghawī, it may be recited once at the beginning of every Sūrah. [Maẓharī]. Either way the requirement of *sunnah* will be fulfilled. And Allah knows best!

Note

In most Sūrahs from Sūrah Ḍuḥā to the end of Qur'ān, Allah's special

favours upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his special virtues and characteristics are mentioned. In a few of the Sūrahs, the Day of Judgement and its conditions are mentioned. The earlier part of the Qur'ān asserts the greatness and authenticity of the Qur'ān, while the later part asserts the greatness of the personality to whom the Qur'ān was revealed.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aḍ-Ḍuḥā
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Inshiraḥ

(Peace of Heart)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 8 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ﴿١﴾ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِىْٓ أَنْقَضَ
ظَهْرَكَ ﴿٣﴾ وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ﴿٤﴾ فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ
الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾ فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانْصَبْ ﴿٧﴾ وَإِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ ﴿٨﴾

Did We not cause your bosom to be wide open for your benefit? [1] **And We removed from you your burden** [2] **that had (almost) broken your back,** [3] **and We raised high for you your name.** [4] **So undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease.** [5] **Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease.** [6] **So when you are free (from collective services), exert yourself (in worship),** [7] **and towards your Lord turn with eagerness.** [8]

Commentary

It was mentioned at the end of the preceding Sūrah that twenty-two Sūrahs from Sūrah Ad-Ḍuḥā to the end of the Qur'ān are mainly concerned with Divine favours conferred upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and with his greatness. Only a few Sūrahs are concerned with the conditions of the Hereafter or some other subject. Sūrah Al-Inshiraḥ is concerned with special favours that Allah conferred upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Its style is the same as that of the preceding Sūrah - the interrogative style. In the preceding Sūrah, the style was 'Did He not find you...?' [Here the style is]:

اَلَمۡ نَشۡرَحۡ لَکَ صَدۡرَکَ (Did We not cause your bosom to be wide open for your benefit?...94:1). The word *sharḥ* literally denotes 'to open, to cause the bosom to be widely opened'. [In the present context] it is to cause the bosom to be wide open to comprehend the Divine mysteries. The verse signifies that Allah illuminated his bosom with wisdom, Divine light and peace and made it spacious, vast and wide as is said in another verse:

فَمَنۡ یُّرِدِ اللّٰهُ اَنۡ یَّهۡدِیَه‘ یَشۡرَحۡ صَدۡرَه‘ لِلۡاِسۡلَامِ

'So, he whom Allah wills to give guidance, He opens his heart for Islam [6:125]'

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ bosom was expanded to receive the knowledge and wisdom and the gracious morals and ethical qualities, which the greatest philosophers could not match. As a result of this expansion of heart, *tawajjuh ilal-makhlūq* (attentiveness to the creation) did not disturb his attentiveness to and concentration on Allah. Some of the authentic Traditions report that the angels, with Allah's permission, physically opened the blessed chest of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Some of the commentators interpret this 'expansion of the chest' to refer to the same miracle, as mentioned in Ibn Kathīr and others. And Allah knows best!

وَوَضَعۡنَا عَنۡکَ وِزۡرَکَ الَّذِیۡۤ اَنۡقَضَ ظَهۡرَکَ (And We removed from you your burden that had [almost] broken your back...94:2-3). The word *wizr* literally denotes 'burden' and the phrase *naqḍ-uz-zahr* means 'to break one's back as for instance when a heavy load is put on one's back, it bends'. This verse signifies that Allah had relieved him of his burden that was breaking his back. What was that burden or heavy load? One answer to this question is that now and then the Holy Prophet ﷺ did certain permissible deeds, thinking that they were of benefit and in the interest [of spiritual development]. Later on he discovered that they were not in keeping with wisdom, or they were undesirable. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was conscious of his high status and close proximity to Allah. He regarded even such things as serious infractions. This was naturally a very heavy load that made him grieved. But Allah relieved him of his burden in that a blanket pardon was granted to him and it was declared that he would not be held accountable for such things.

Some commentators say that *wizr* (burden) refers to the effect of revelation. It weighed heavily on him in the initial stages of the

Prophet-hood. He was saddled with a nerve-racking and back-breaking task of raising [a morally degenerated people], through propagation of *Tauḥīd* and elimination of *kufr* and *shirk*, [from the depths of moral turpitude to the peaks of spiritual excellence, and then through them to cleanse and purify the whole of mankind of the dross of iniquity, ignorance and superstition]. The task enjoined:

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

'So, stand firm - as you have been commanded [11:112]'

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to feel the heavy weight of this task and responsibility. Some narration report that a few strands of his beard had turned grey as a result of this command. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the following verse has made me old:

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ أُمِرْتَ

'So, stand firm - as you have been commanded [11:112]'

Verses [2-3] give the cheerful news that Allah will remove from him the load which was weighing down his back. The following verses show how the back-breaking load will be removed, and every difficulty will be followed by ease and relief. By means of expansion of bosom, Allah gave the Holy Prophet ﷺ so much of courage that no instance of hardship seemed hardship, and no burden of any magnitude seemed a burden. And Allah knows best!

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ (and We raised high for you your name....94:4). The meaning of raising the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is that his blessed name is remembered together with the name of Allah in all the symbols of Islam, like the *kalimah,* the *adhān*, the *iqāmah*, and in sermons from the minarets and pulpits [throughout the world]:

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ

اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰه

> (I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah; I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.'

No sensible person utters the Holy Prophet's ﷺ name without respect and honour even though he may not be a Muslim.

Note Carefully

Here three verses mention three favours that are bestowed on the Holy Prophet ﷺ: [1] opening of the bosom widely; [2] removal of the burden; and [3] raising of the name high. Each of the sentence is composed of a verb, an object and between them is a prepositional phrase thus:

شرح صدر

'for your benefit? [1]'

وضع وزر

'from you your burden [2]'

رفع ذكر

'for you your name. [4]'

This indicates the essential characteristic and special greatness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, in that all this is done for the sake of him.

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا. إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا (So undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease....94:6). Grammatically, if the Arabic definite article *al-* is prefixed to an Arabic noun and is repeated with the same definite article *al-*, they refer to the same antecedent. However, if the same noun is repeated without the definite article, they refer to different antecedents. The word *al-'usr* '[the] hardship' in verse [6] is the repetition of *al-'usr* '[the] hardship' occurring in verse [5]. It does not refer to a new hardship. In contrast to this, the word *yusr* 'ease' in both verses occur without the definite article. This indicates that the second *yusr* 'ease' in verse [6] is a different antecedent to the *yusr* 'ease' occurring in verse [5]. Thus it may be concluded that there is only one *'usr* 'hardship' and two *yusr* 'twofold ease'. 'Twofold ease' does not mean twice as much. In fact, it means 'manifold ease'. The verse signifies that only one kind of hardship will face him, but in the wake of it many kinds of ease are assured.

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ emerged from his home in a very happy mood and, giving cheerful news to his Companions on the basis of the current verse, said: "One hardship cannot overcome twofold ease". Thus history and

biographical books written by Muslims and non-Muslims - all bear ample testimony to fact that the most difficult task, even the seemingly impossible task, became easy for him. The above narration further indicates that the Arabic definite article *al-* signifies that it is an article used to indicate previous knowledge [that is, *al- lil 'ahd*] and refers to the hardship of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. Allah kept to His promise to them in such a way that the world saw it visibly how in the wake of every hardship the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions experienced the manifold ease that made their task easy. If a person does not achieve 'ease' after 'hardship', it does not contradict this verse. In fact, even now Allah's universal principle applies. One needs to exercise fortitude against hardship, rely on Allah with purity of heart, devote oneself totally to Him, hold onto high hopes for His grace, and one should not despair of His mercy if there is delay in success - He certainly will grant relief after every instance of hardship. [Fawā'id-e-'Usmāniah]. Ḥadīth narratives support this.

The Command for Teachers and Preachers to Remember Allah During Spare Hours

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانْصَبْ. وَإِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ (So when you are free [from collective services], exert yourself [in worship], and towards your Lord turn with eagerness....94:8). The Holy Prophet ﷺ is commanded in these verses that when he has finished his day's work of teaching and training his followers and other temporal affairs, he should turn to Allah as ever with all his heart, that is, prayers, remembrance of Allah, supplication and seeking Allah's pardon. This is the interpretation assigned to this verse by most commentators. Some scholars have interpreted it differently, but the foregoing interpretation appears to be the closest. The sum total of this interpretation is as follows: The Holy Prophet ﷺ exerted himself greatly to spread the word of Allah and reform human beings. Exerting himself to human reform was his greatest form of 'worship' but it was 'indirect worship' through planning and executing the plan of human reform. The verse purports to say that the indirect worship is not sufficient. So, when he is free from collective services to humanity, he should devote time to turn to Him by carrying out 'direct worship' by turning to Allah in prayer for the success of his efforts, because this 'direct worship' is what man is created for. Probably, that is why the 'indirect worship' has been

mentioned as something that may be finished and one may be free from, because that is based on need, and a believer can free himself from it, but the 'direct worship' of Allah is such that he cannot free himself from it. He has to spend his entire life and expend all his energy in it.

Note

This indicates that scholars [who are involved in education, propagation and human reform] should not be unmindful of 'direct worship'. Some time should be devoted specifically, in privacy, to attentiveness to, and remembrance of Allah as the biography of the righteous predecessors bear testimony to the fact that without it neither education nor preaching can be effective. It would be devoid of light and blessings.

Note

The word *fanṣab* derived from *naṣab* means 'to be tired'. The verse signifies that one should tire oneself when carrying out acts of worship. One should not carry out acts of worship only when one finds it convenient. Binding oneself to a *waẓīfah* (a usual course of optional worships) is itself quite exerting and tiring, no matter how little.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Inshirāḥ
Ends here

Sūrah At-Tīn

(The Fig)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 8 verses

بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

وَالتِّيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُوْنِ ﴿١﴾ وَطُوْرِ سِيْنِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾ وَهٰذَا الْبَلَدِ الْاَمِيْنِ ﴿٣﴾ لَقَدْ
خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ فِيْٓ اَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيْمٍ ﴿٤﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنٰهُ اَسْفَلَ سٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾
اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَلَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَا
يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالدِّيْنِ ﴿٧﴾ اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِاَحْكَمِ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾

I swear by the Fig and the Olive, [1] **and by Tur, the mount of Sinai,** [2] **and by this peaceful city,** [3] **We have created man in the best composition,** [4] **then We turned him into the lowest of the low,** [5] **except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending.** [6] **So, what can make you, after all this, to deny the Requital?** [7] **Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers?** [8]

Commentary

وَالتِّيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُوْنِ (I swear by the Fig and the Olive...95:1). This verse takes an oath by four objects. Two of them are trees, the fig tree and the olive tree. [The third object] is Tur, the mount of Sinai, and the fourth object is the City of Makkah. The two trees have been specified because they possess abundant blessings and advantages in the same way as Ṭūr and the City of Makkah possess abundant blessings. Some authorities say that the 'fig' and the 'olive' symbolise, in this context, the lands in which these

trees predominate: that is, the countries bordering on the eastern part of the Mediterranean, especially Palestine and Syria. Most of the Prophets lived and preached in these lands, including Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. The latter Prophet ﷺ was made to migrate from here to Makkah. The oaths, in this way, comprehend all the holy places where Allah-inspired men were born and raised as Prophets ﷺ. Syria was the land and home of all the Prophets. Mount Sinai stresses specifically the messengership of Mūsā عليه السلام where Allah spoke to him. 'Peaceful City' refers to Makkah, the birth-place and residence of the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The subject of the four oaths is: لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ (We have created man in the best composition...95:4). The word *taqwīm* literally denotes 'to set a thing aright or lay the foundation straight or even; or to form something into an appropriate shape in a moderate regulation'. The verse signifies that man has been endowed with the best natural powers and qualities which other creatures have not been endowed with. Physically too he is cast in the best composition - having no parallel in other creatures.

Man is the Most Beautiful of Allah's Creation

Allah has created man the most beautiful of all His creation. Ibn 'Arabī asserts that there is no creature of Allah more beautiful than man, because Allah, besides granting him life, he gave him knowledge, power, speech, hearing, sight, planning and wisdom. All these, in fact, are the qualities of Allah. It is mentioned in a ḥadīth of Bukhārī and Muslim:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلٰى صُوْرَتِهٖ

'Allah has created Adam in His image'

It could only mean that man has been characterised by some of the qualities of Allah, because Allah is beyond any [physical] shape or image. [Qurṭubī].

A Wonderful Story of Human Beauty

Qurṭubī, on this occasion, cites a story of 'Īsā Ibn Mūsā Hāshimī. He was a high ranking officer in the royal court of Caliph Abū Ja'far Manṣūr. The officer loved his wife very much. Once he was sitting with his wife in a moonlit night and suddenly cried out:

انت طالق ثلاثًا ان لم تكونى احسن من القمر

'You are divorced thrice if you are not more beautiful than the moon.'

As soon as the wife heard this, she went into seclusion and veiled herself, on the grounds that the husband has pronounced three express divorce on her. It was said in joke. However, the law of express divorce is that it becomes effective whether uttered jokingly or seriously. 'Īsā Ibn Mūsā spent the night restlessly and in grief. The next morning, he paid a visit to Caliph Abū Ja'far Manṣūr and recounted to him the whole story. Caliph Abū Ja'far Manṣūr invited all the jurists of the city and put the case before them. All the jurists unanimously agreed that the divorce has become effective, because no human being can possibly be more beautiful than the moon. There was, however, one scholar, a student of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, who remained silent. Manṣūr asked him: "Why are you so quiet?" He recited '*Bismillah* to the end' and then recited Sūrah Tīn and explained: "Ruler of the Faithful, Allah says that He has created man in the best composition or in the finest mould. Nothing can be more beautiful than man." Having heard this, all the scholars and jurists were perplexed. None of them opposed him. Manṣūr ordered that the divorce is not effective.

This indicates that man is the most beautiful creation of Allah outwardly and inwardly, in terms of elegance and attractiveness and in terms of bodily structure. Every limb of the human body is able to move in many different ways. He is able to hold, move and lift various things by moving his hands and arms. The thumb alone is a masterpiece of creation without which man will not be able to hold things. The functioning of the ears, the eyes, the mouth, the teeth, the nose, the chest and the stomach are all wonders in their own right. Gathered together on his head, they form a beautiful and coherent assortment, each one complementing the other. The flexibility of the tongue, the arrangement of the teeth and the mastery of the vocal cords allow him to roar like a lion and sing as beautifully as a nightingale. All this makes human body look like a sophisticated factory where automatic machines are able to accomplish the delicate work. This is the reason why philosophers call man 'microcosm' [a miniature universe as opposed to 'macrocosm' {a large universe}]. The microcosm epitomises the macrocosm. [Qurṭubī]

The Ṣūfis have supported this concept. Some scholars have analysed in detail - from head to toe - to show how man is the epitome of the large universe.

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنٰهُ اَسْفَلَ سٰفِلِيْنَ (then We turned him into the lowest of the low...95:5). In the preceding sentence, it was stated that man is created in the best composition and is the most beautiful being. In the prime of his life, man is brimming with strength and vigour and all his faculties are functioning at their best. As opposed to that, this sentence states that when man ages, he physically grows weaker and his health deteriorates all the time. He even begins to lose his physical beauty. He no longer has a good-looking and attractive face. He begins to look uglier. He becomes useless and a burden to others. Other animals, on the contrary, are useful to the end of their lives. Man utilises them for milk, for mounting, for luggage-loading and for myriad of other things. When they are slaughtered or dead, man still utilises their hide, hair, bones and every other part or fibre of theirs usefully. Man, on the other hand, becomes useless when he falls ill or grows old. From the worldly point of view he is unable to do anything. Even when he dies, no part of his body is of any benefit to any man or animal. In short, the phrase 'the lowest of the low' refers to bodily condition. His body bends over and legs can barely carry him. The man who was once supporting others now needs others to support him. [Ḍaḥḥāk and others vide Qurṭubī].

اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَلَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ (except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending....95:6). The foregoing interpretation of the preceding verse should not be misunderstood. The exceptive sentence does not mean that the believers will not attain to decrepit old age. It would not be correct to exclude the believers from this, because some of them are also overcome by the senility of old age. The sense, however, is that they do not suffer a big harm due to their physical or mental deterioration in old age. Only those will suffer from it who spent their entire energy on improving their physical condition that has now ended. They shall have no portion of it in the Hereafter. The righteous believers will have an unfailing reward. This verse makes it clear that even after reaching old age, a believer never becomes useless. Even in decrepitude he can accumulate rewards -

comfort and high positions - for the Hereafter that are eternal. During the period of senility when he is unable to do righteous deeds, the good deeds will be recorded in his Record Book which he used to do in good health. Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that when a Muslim falls ill Allah instructs the recording angels to record the good deeds he used to perform in good health. [Al-Baghawī transmitted it in Sharḥ-us-Suunah from Abū Mūsā, and Bukhārī has reported the same rewards for a traveller and a person suffering from a disease.) Here instead of mentioning the rewards and blessings of Paradise for the righteous believers, the verse reads: لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ (for them there is a reward never ending.) This could signify that their reward starts in this mortal world [and continues in the Hereafter eternally]. Allah gathers around them in their decrepit old age such sincere companions who benefit from them spiritually until the last moment of their life. They serve them in every possible way. The righteous servants of Allah in decrepitude are productive while generally the senile and people in bad health are thought to be unproductive.

Some commentators say that the statement - رَدَدْنٰهُ اَسْفَلَ سٰفِلِيْنَ (We turned him into the lowest of the low) does not refer to human beings in general. It refers specifically to unbelievers who destroyed the God-given best composition, human perfection, honour and intellect by pursuing physical pleasures. As a result of their ingratitude, they will be turned into the lowest of the low. In this interpretation, the exception - اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا (except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending) will carry its basic interpretation, in that they will not be turned into the lowest of the low. For those who believed and did righteous deeds, there is a reward that is unending. [Thus in al-Maẓharī].

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالدِّيْنِ (So, what can make you, after all this, to deny the Requital?...95:7). In the preceding verses man is made to realise that Allah created him, He bestowed on him special favours and the revolution that He brought about in his old age. Man will move from stage to stage, finally reaching the grave and the Hereafter. But he rejects the Hereafter, as a result he is warned. He has seen the scenes of Divine omnipotence and revolutions - how dare he denies and rejects the Hereafter! Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]

Ruling

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﵁ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that while reciting Sūrah At-Tīn, when one reaches the end of it:

أَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِأَحْكَمِ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ

'Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]'

one should recite:

بَلٰى وَأَنَا عَلٰى ذٰلِكَ مِنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ

'Yes, indeed, Allah is the Ruler of the rulers, and I bear witness to it.'

The jurists have ruled that it is *mustaḥab* (preferable/desirable) to recite the words.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Tīn
Ends here

Sūrah Al-'Alaq

(The Clot)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 19 verses and 1 section.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 19

اِقْرَاْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اِقْرَاْ
وَرَبُّكَ الْاَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِىْ عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْاِنْسَانَ مَالَمْ يَعْلَمْ
﴿٥﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَيَطْغٰٓى ﴿٦﴾ اَنْ رَّاٰهُ اسْتَغْنٰى ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ
الرُّجْعٰى ﴿٨﴾ اَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِىْ يَنْهٰى ﴿٩﴾ عَبْدًا اِذَا صَلّٰى ﴿١٠﴾ اَرَءَيْتَ
اِنْ كَانَ عَلَى الْهُدٰٓى ﴿١١﴾ اَوْ اَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوٰى ﴿١٢﴾ اَرَءَيْتَ اِنْ كَذَّبَ
وَتَوَلّٰى ﴿١٣﴾ اَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَرٰى ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا
بِالنَّاصِيَةِ ﴿١٥﴾ نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهٗ ﴿١٧﴾ سَنَدْعُ
الزَّبَانِيَةَ ﴿١٨﴾ كَلَّا لَاتُطِعْهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ ﴿١٩﴾

Read with the name of your Lord who created (every thing), [1] He created man from a clot of blood. [2] Read, and your Lord is the most gracious, [3] who imparted knowledge by means of the pen. [4] He taught man what he did not know. [5] The fact is that man crosses the limits, [6] because he deems himself to be free of need. [7] Surely to your Lord is to return. [8] Have you seen him who forbids [9] a slave of Allah when he prays? [10] Tell me, if he is on the right path, [11] or bids to piety,

(would the former still forbid him?) [12] **Tell me, if he rejects (the true faith) and turns away,** [13] **does he not know that Allah is watching (him)?** [14] **No! If he does not desist, We will certainly drag (him) by forelock,** [15] **a lying, sinful forelock.** [16] **So let him call the men of his council,** [17] **We will call the soldiers of the Hell.** [18] **No! Never obey him, and bow down in sajdah, and come closer.** [19]

Beginning of The Qur'ānic Revelation

It is universally agreed that the first five verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq or Iqra' mark the very beginning of Qur'ānic revelation. [Baghawī]. Bukhārī, Muslim, other authentic sources and overwhelming consensus of scholars, ancient and modern, all concur on this point. However, some scholars state that Sūrah Al-Muddaththir was the first Sūrah to be revealed, and yet others say that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah [The Opening] was revealed first. It is possible to reconcile between these different views as follows: After the revelation of Sūrah Al-'Alaq or Iqra', there was a temporary break in the revelation during which the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be very sad, but after some time, the Angel Jibra'īl appeared to him once again, and he faced the same situation as he faced when the first verses of Sūrah Iqra' were revealed to him. On this occasion, the opening verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir were conveyed to him by the angel. From this point of view, it may be said that the first Sūrah to be revealed after the temporary break was Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. Some of the Companions held the view that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah was the first Sūrah to be revealed. They probably meant to say that this was the first Sūrah to be revealed in a complete form. Undoubtedly, some verses (of Sūrahs Al-'Alaq or Iqra', Al-Muzzammil and Al-Muddaththir) were revealed earlier, but the rest of the verses of those Sūrahs were revealed at later dates. Al-Fātiḥah is the first Sūrah that was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in its entirety, all seven verses at once. [Maẓharī]

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ First Experience of Revelation

In a lengthy narration, as recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim, the Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا says that revelation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was started by true dreams. Whatever he saw in a dream would happen in reality as clearly as the light of dawn. Then solitude became dear to him, and he used to seclude

himself for worship in the cave Ḥirā', (a cave in the mount known today as 'Jabal-un-Nūr, which is clearly visible in front of Jannat-ul-Ma'lā, the famous graveyard of Makkah) and therein he devoted himself to Divine worship for several nights before he came back to his family and took provisions for his retirement; then he would return to the Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah Khadījah رضی اللہ عنہا and take more provisions for a similar period. (The period of his stay in the cave is mentioned differently by different reports, but the report of *ṣaḥīḥain* maintains that it was a month, the whole month of Ramaḍān. Authentic traditions are silent about the mode of worship he adopted during this period. Some scholars have opined that he used to worship according to the Sharī'ah of Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm and 'Īsā علیہم السلام, but neither any authentic report supports it, nor is it likely, because he was an *'ummiyy* (unlettered). It is, therefore, more likely that his worship was concentration and reflection on Allah Almighty and His omnipotence until the Truth, that is, the revelation came to him while he was in the cave of Ḥirā'; so the angel came to him and said, اِقْرَاْ 'Read'. The Holy Prophet replied, ما انا بقاری 'I am not the one who can read'. (The Holy Prophet ﷺ was under the impression that he was directing him to read a written document. Since the Holy Prophet ﷺ could not read or write, he replied accordingly.) Then the angel embraced him and pressed him so hard that he felt extreme pain, then he released him and said, اِقْرَاْ 'Read'. The Holy Prophet replied, 'I am not the one who can read'. Then he embraced him and pressed him a second time so hard that he felt extreme pain, then he released him again and said, اِقْرَاْ 'Read'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, ما انا بقاری 'I am not the one who can read'. Then he embraced the Holy Prophet ﷺ and pressed him a third time, then he released him and said,

اِقْرَاْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ ﴿۱﴾ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿۲﴾ اِقْرَاْ وَرَبُّكَ الْاَكْرَمُ ﴿۳﴾ الَّذِىْ عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿۴﴾ عَلَّمَ الْاِنْسَانَ مَالَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿۵﴾

'Read with the Name of your Lord Who created [everything], He created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the most gracious, who imparted knowledge by means of the Pen. He taught man what he did not know.'

The Messenger of Allah returned with this message [of five verses] while his heart trembled and he came to Sayyidah Khadījah رضی اللہ عنہا, saying زمّلونی زمّلونی 'wrap me up, wrap me up', and she wrapped him up, until the awe left him. (It should be noted that the fear felt by the Holy

Prophet ﷺ was due to the great responsibility delegated to him, and due to the unusual event of seeing an angel in his original form.)

Then he said to Sayyidah Khadījah رضی اللہ عنہا while he related to her what had happened: "I feared for myself." Sayyidah Khadījah رضی اللہ عنہا said: 'Nay, by Allah, Allah will never expose you to disgrace, because you unite the ties of kinship, and bear the burden of the weak, and earn for the destitute, and offer hospitality to the guests, and help (people) in real distress.'

Then Sayyidah Khadījah رضی اللہ عنہا took him to her cousin, Waraqah Ibn Naufal. He was a man who had adopted Christianity (which was a true religion at that time) during the days of Ignorance, and he used to write the Hebrew script, and translate it into Arabic. He was a very old man who had turned blind. Sayyidah Khadījah رضی اللہ عنہا said to him, O Uncle's son! Listen to your brother's son. Waraqah asked him, My brother's son! What have you seen? So the Messenger of Allah related to him what he had seen. Waraqah said to him, This is the very same confidant [angel Jibra'īl عليه السلام] whom Allah sent to Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام; would that I were a young man at this time - would that I were alive when your people would expel you! The Messenger of Allah asked in surprise, "Will they expel me?" He replied. Yes; never has a man appeared with the like of that which you have brought, but he has been held in enmity; and if your time finds me alive, I shall help you with the fullest support. After that, not much time had passed before Waraqah died, and the revelation broke off temporarily. [Bukhārī and Muslim]

The temporary break of revelation, according to Suhailī, lasted for about a year and half. Other reports say that it lasted to about three years. [Maẓharī]

Verse [1] اِقْرَاْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ (Read with the Name of your Lord, Who created [everything]) In the prepositional phrase *bismi rabbika* [with the name of your Lord], the addition of the word *ismi* is significant in two ways [1] that whenever the Qur'ān is being recited, the reader should begin by reciting the formula بسم اللہ الرحمٰن الرحیم "With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful". When Jibra'īl Amīn عليه السلام suddenly appeared to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said *'iqra'* (read) , he tendered

apology that he is unable to read or recite, because he is unlettered. The phrase b-ismi rabbika points to the fact that under present circumstances you, O Holy Prophet ﷺ, may be '*ummiyy*' or unlettered, but Allah has the power to grant you the highest level of knowledge, the most elegant style of oration and eloquence, so that you would surpass and subdue the most educated or literate people, as it became manifest later on. [Maẓharī]. [2] Allah has many Beautiful Names, but the blessed name *rabb* is particularly chosen in the verse here probably because it supports and emphasizes the theme that Allah cherishes and sustains the Holy Prophet ﷺ through all the different stages of his development, until he is fully consummated. He can make him read and recite, despite being unlettered. In the relative clause *al-ladhī khalaqa* [Who created], particularly contains the Divine attribute of *takhlīq* [creating] presumably because the first Divine favor is *wujūd* or 'existence' as a result of His drawing out beings from the realm of non-existence into the realm of existence. Many other favors of His follow. The verb *khalaqa* [created] is transitive and it requires an object that is absent here. This indicates the verb is used absolutely, and it signifies that the Creator has created the entire universe and every existent thing it contains.

Verse [2] خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (Created man from a clot of blood.) The previous verse referred to the creation of macrocosm, the large or entire universe in general. In this verse, the phrase is *khalaqa'l-insān* which refers to the creation of microcosm 'the best, noblest or most honourable creation', Man. If analysed carefully, we notice that man is the epitome of macrocosm or the large universe. He is a small scale representation, analogue, or miniature of the large and complex universe. Another reason why man has been particularly mentioned is that the purpose of Prophet-hood, messenger-hood and revelation of the Qur'ān is the implementation of Divine ordinances, injunctions and laws and acting upon them: This is the essential peculiarity of mankind. The word *'alaq*, being the plural of *'alaqatun,* means 'congealed blood'. The creation of man has passed and passes through various phases. His primordial creation is from the four major elements, that is, earth, water, fire and air. His procreation is from an insignificant and humble state, the sperm which then transforms into congealed blood. This is the primary state of

the embryo which happens after the conception. Then it takes the shape of a lump of flesh and then the skeletal structure is created. *'Alaqah* is the middle phase in the whole process of creation. The specific mention of *'alaqah* covers the initial stage and the final stage of the process of creation.

Verse [3] اِقْرَاْ وَرَبُّکَ الْاَکْرَمُ (Read, and your Lord is the most gracious.) The command *iqra'* [Read] has been repeated in this verse for two reasons: The first command in verse [1] was for the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself to read or recite. The second command in this verse is to proclaim, convey, communicate and teach or preach. It is not inconceivable that the command *iqra'* is repeated by deliberate design for emphasis. The Divine attribute *al-Akram* 'the Most Gracious' signifies that Allah did not create the world or man for any ulterior motive, for selfish motivation or for His own benefit. He has done it out of His infinite grace, generosity and magnanimity. He endowed upon the universe the great favour of existence without asking for it.

Verse [4] الَّذِیْ عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ (Who imparted knowledge by means of the Pen.) The preceding verse spoke of the creation of man. The current verse speaks of man's education or literacy, because knowledge, as part of education and literacy, distinguishes man from all other animals and creatures, and occupies the position of the crown of creation. There are two means, methods or media through which knowledge is imparted: [1] oral or spoken method or by word of mouth; and [2] Pen or written method. The command *iqra'* [read] at the beginning of Sūrah refers to the oral or spoken method. However, the current verse, which speaks more explicitly about imparting knowledge, speaks of the written method of recording and transmitting knowledge from generation to generation.

Pen and Writing: The First and Most Important Means of Transmitting Knowledge

An authentic narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضی اللہ عنہ reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

لَمَّا خلق اللّٰه الخلق کتب فی کتابه فهو عنده فوق العرش، ان رحمتی غلبت غضبی

"When Allah created the creation, He inscribed a document which is with Him above the Throne: Indeed My mercy has preceded My anger."

In another narration, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

اوّل ما خلق اللّٰه القلم، فقال له: اكتب، فكتب مايكون الٰى يوم القيٰمة فهو عنده فى الذكر فوق عرشهٖ

"The first thing Allah created was the pen. He told it to write, so it wrote what was to take place till Doomsday. This is with Allah on His Throne." [Qurṭubī]

Three Types of Pen

Scholars have said that there are three types of pen in the world: [1] a Pen that Allah created with His own hand and instructed it to write the decree of the universe; [2] the pen of the angels who record the events that are to occur and their magnitude, they also use it to record the deeds of human beings; and [3] the pen of human beings, which they use to reduce their speech to writing. Writing, in fact, is a kind of speech [or a manifestation of it]. Humans are biologically programmed by Allah for speech , and it is thus natural, inborn and innate faculty. [Qurṭubī] The leading authority on Tafsīr, Mujāhid, cites from Abū 'Amr that Allah created four things in the entire universe with His own Creative hand, and the rest of the creation came into being by His cosmic command of *kun* [be] and they became. The four things are: [1] the pen; [2]The Divine Throne; [3] the Garden of Eden; and [4] Holy Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام.

Who was First Trained in the Writing Skill and Art ?

Scholars have differed on this question. Some say the art and skill of writing was first imparted to the father of mankind, i.e. the prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام and he was the first one to write. [Ka'b Aḥbār]. Others say that this art was first taught to the Holy Prophet Idrīs عليه السلام and he was thus the very first scribe. [Ḍaḥḥāk]. Some others have observed that the art and skill of writing is the Divine knowledge given as a gift to anyone whom Allah wills.

Writing Skill and Art: A Great Divine Gift

Sayyidnā Qatādah رضي الله عنه has stated that Pen is a great Divine gift. If Allah had not granted man the art and skill of writing with pen, it would not have been possible for him to preserve or protect the religion in its pristine form, nor would it have been possible for him to conduct his worldly affairs in the proper manner. Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه has stated that it

is a great generosity that Allah has granted His servants knowledge of things they did not know. He drew them out from the darkness of ignorance and brought them into the light of knowledge. He urged them to acquire the art and skill of writing as it accrues great benefits. Only Allah is able to keep count of the benefits of writing. All sciences and philosophies are codified by means of pen. The history of the former and latter nations are compiled by means of pen. Their chronicles and monographs are preserved in writing. The Divinely revealed Books are committed to writing, and shall be preserved till the world lasts. 'The pen' is thus able to make great contribution towards the propagation and dissemination of spiritual sciences and Divine secrets revealed by the Qur'ān and of physical sciences to which the study of the Qur'ān imparted a great stimulus. Without the pen, all worldly and religious works will come to a standstill.

Writing Skill and Art: Attitude of Scholars in All Ages

Scholars of the former and the latter times have always realised the stupendous role pen plays in the preservation and transmission of knowledge, as a result they made a great use of it and left behind a huge legacy of books and writings. It is regretful to notice that in this age students and scholars have ignored the importance of this skill and art. As a result, scarcely a few people in a few million people have mastered the art, or developed the skill, of writing. To Allah do we direct our complaint!

Writing Skill and Art: The Reason Why the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not Taught

It is really very significant that mention should have been made of 'Pen' in a Book which was revealed to a person, the Final Messenger ﷺ, who himself did not know how to read and write. The reason for this is the profound Divine wisdom underlying it. Allah had willed that the dignity and status of the Final Messenger should be far above the thinking of the general populace. Allah placed the Holy Prophet ﷺ in an environment which was not favourable for any spontaneous accomplishments, nor was it conducive to any achievements by natural exposure. His birth-place was the rugged and rocky mountainous terrain. The desert of Arabia had fewer plants apart from the date-palms, little water apart from the *zam zam* well and the weather was always dry, far away from civilisation, and completely cut off from the cradle of knowledge and wisdom. The communications system or network was

inaccessible; as a result, the people of Arabia had no contact with Syria, Iraq, Egypt and other civilised areas of the world. Hence, all the Arabs were referred to as 'unlettered' who generally had no respect for knowledge, wisdom and writing. Very rarely people had the opportunity to learn knowledge or to acquire the art and skill of writing. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was born in such bare region, among such illiterate tribes and in such harsh environment. He was never given the opportunity to become literate. It was inconceivable that a person born in such a surrounding will be gifted with knowledge, wisdom and high morals. He was, however, suddenly granted the cloak of Prophet-hood, together with incessant flow of knowledge and wisdom. The greatest of poets and orators of Arabia were subdued by the eloquence of the unlettered Holy Prophet ﷺ. This was his open and overt miracle. Every open-minded person should be able to see with his eye of certainty that his attainments were not the result of acquisition by his own efforts or human exertion, but they were the result of the invisible generosity of Allah Who endowed him with the Prophetic gift. This is the Divine wisdom underlying the reason why the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not trained in the skill and the art of writing. [Adapted from Qurṭubī]

Verse [5] عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَالَمْ يَعْلَمْ (Taught Man what he did not know." The preceding verse was concerned with a particular means of teaching, namely, 'pen', the written method.

Many other Means of Teaching

The present verse purports to say that the real teacher is Allah, and He has innumerable ways and means, besides pen, to impart knowledge. Therefore, the verse says that Allah taught man things with which he was unacquainted previously. The verse does not mention 'pen' or any other means of teaching. The reason for that is man is taught from the very inception of his life. First, he is gifted with intellect, the greatest means of receiving knowledge. Man, by the right use of intellect, is able to understand many things. Further, his entire environment is the manifestation of the perfect power of Allah and studded with the evidence of Divine power by witnessing which he is able to recognise his Creator. Revelation and inspiration are other means of knowledge. The knowledge of many essential things are learnt intuitively. Intuition is the God-given ability to know or understand things through feelings, rather than by considering facts or evidence. As a result, there is no need for tongue or pen. When a baby is born, it is not conscious of how its environment

operates. However, it instinctively reaches out for the mother's breast, when it feels hungry and feeds itself. Who teaches it and who can teach it? Allah has taught it the 'skill' of crying since its birth. The cry of the baby is the means of satisfying all its needs. When it cries, it becomes a cause of concern for the parents to find out what is wrong. The baby's cry satisfies its hunger, thirst, heat and cold. Who teaches the new-born baby how to cry? All this is instinctive knowledge with which Allah has programmed every living organism, especially man. After the instinctive knowledge, man's knowledge continues to increase by word of mouth, and then by the supra-rational organ of intuition, called the heart. Apparently, there was no need to say مَالَمْ يَعْلَمْ (... what he did not know) because normally knowledge is imparted of things that are not known. It is explicitly stated here, probably because man may not assume that the God-given knowledge and skills are the results of his own efforts and exertion. The concluding phrase مَالَمْ يَعْلَمْ "what he did not know" has been added in order to make man realise that there was a time when he knew nothing, thus in [16:78] we came across اَخْرَجَكُمْ مِّنْ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ لَاتَعْلَمُوْنَ شَيْئًا (And Allah has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs when you knew nothing...). This shows that knowledge is not an ingrained personal excellence of man. It is the gift of the Creator and the Master. [Maẓharī]. Some scholars interpret the word 'man' to be referring to the Holy Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام because he was the first man to whom knowledge was imparted, thus in [2:31] وَعَلَّمَ اٰدَمَ الْاَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا (And He taught 'Ādam the names, all of them...). And others say the reference is to the Final Messenger ﷺ whose knowledge embraces the knowledge of all the previous Prophets.

As stated earlier, these five verses of this Sūrah represent the very beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān. Verses [6-19] of the Sūrah are of much later date. We assert this on the following grounds: These verses were revealed in connection with an incident in which Abū Jahl prevented the Holy Prophet ﷺ from offering *ṣalāh*. In the initial stages of revelation and Prophet-hood, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had no enemies in Makkah. All used to call him by the title of 'al-Amīn' [the honest or upright]. They respected and loved him. Abū Jahl's enmity and opposition obviously started when the Holy Prophet ﷺ proclaimed his propagation openly, called the people towards Islam publicly, and performed the *ṣalāh* in the Sacred Mosque. *Ṣalāh* was prescribed on the Night of Ascent, (Mi'rāj). Therefore, prevention from *ṣalāh*, referred to in these verses, may not be imagined before that time.

Verses [6-7] كَلَّآ إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَيَطْغَىٰ. أَن رَّآهُ اسْتَغْنَىٰ (The fact is that man crosses the limits, because he deems himself to be free of need.) Although the verse immediately refers to a particular person, namely, Abū Jahl who insulted the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the statement is general which draws man's attention to one of his weaknesses. So long as man is in need of others, he walks straight; but when he thinks that he does not need anyone, he tends towards transgression, and develops the tendency to wrong-doing, tyranny and oppression. This is generally the behavior of the affluent people, government officials, and people with abundant children and friends or servants. They become purse-proud and intoxicated with the leadership power they exercise on their groups. Abū Jahl was a typical example of this. He was one of the well-to-do and prosperous people of Makkah. All the members of his tribe and inhabitants of the city respected and obeyed him. He became arrogant and insulted the leader of all the Prophets ﷺ - the noblest of creation. The next verse warns such arrogant people about the evil consequences of their behavior.

Verse [8] إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ (Surely to your Lord is the Return.) The word *ruj'a*, like *bushrā*, is the verbal noun of infinitive - meaning all will be returning to their Lord. The apparent meaning is 'returning to the Lord after death and giving account of good and bad deeds and seeing with their own eyes the evil consequences of arrogance.' The profounder meaning of the verse is that though man has been endowed with great natural powers and has been created in the best make, he errs grievously if he thinks that he can ignore Allah's help and guidance. He constantly stands in need of Divine assistance, because his capacities and capabilities - either as an individual or in his collective capacity - are at best limited. The proud and arrogant man is thus not self-sufficient. If he thinks deeply, he will find that he needs Allah for every movement and pause. If He has apparently not made any member of the human species in need of another, he is at least in need of Allah for all his needs. Thinking that human beings are not in need of one another is also a fallacy. Allah has made man a social being, and as such he cannot satisfy all his needs by himself. Allah has made the social system or network such that all human beings need one another to satisfy their needs some time or the other. Let us consider an example: A fresh morsel of food that goes into our mouth and we swallow it unreflecting, is the result of thousands of human beings and animals who worked hard for a long period of time. It is not

possible for anyone to engage so many thousands of human beings in his service. The same applies to clothes and other needs which require the services of thousands of millions of humans and animals to prepare the needful things. None of them is his servant. Even if he hires them at a rate of wages to work for him, it would not be possible for him to pay them their wages or salary. This secret or mystery dawns upon man when he realizes that the system of preparing all his needs is set into motion by the consummate wisdom of the Creator of the universe. He inspired someone to become a farmer, He cast into another's mind to become a woodcutter or a carpenter, He kindled in someone else's mind to become a blacksmith, He stimulated others to be content with labouring or working for somebody else, He ignited in others the burning desire to be involved in commerce or business, trade or industry. In this way, Allah has set up a *bazaar* of human needs which no government, nor its legal system or an individual could ever set up. A careful thinking along this line must lead us to the natural corollary that إِنَّ إِلَى رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَى (Surely to your Lord is the Return.", that is, we witness that ultimately all things are under Divine power and wisdom.

Verses [9-10] أَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَى. عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّى (Have you seen him who forbids a slave of Allah when he prays?) From here to the end of the Sūrah, the verses allude to an incident. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was enjoined to perform the *ṣalāh*, he started performing it at first privately, later in public in the Sacred Mosque. Abū Jahl stopped him from performing *ṣalāh* and threatened him that if he were to perform *ṣalāh* and prostrate, he would [God forbid!] trample his neck. Verse [14] أَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى (Does he not know that Allah is watching?) is in response to the threat made by Abū Jahl, and the verse does not mention whom He is watching. It is of general application - He is watching the pious personality who is performing the *ṣalāh*, as well as the wretched, miserable person who is obstructing the performance of the *ṣalāh*. Here the statement merely asserts that Allah is watching everything and everyone. It does not specify what will happen at Resurrection, because the horrible, terrible and dreadful scenes of that are unimaginable.

Verse [15 - concluding part] لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ (...We will certainly drag [him] by forelock.) The *nasfa'an* is derived from the infinitive *saf'uun* which means 'to seize and drag' and the word *nāṣiyah* means 'forelock', that is, the front part of a person's hair that falls forward over the

forehead. When a person's forelock is seized , he becomes helpless in the hands of the seizer.

Verse [19] كَلَّا لَاتُطِعْهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ (No! never obey him, and bow down in *sajdah* {Prostration}, and come closer.) The Holy Prophet ﷺ is advised to ignore and disobey Abū Jahl when he stops him from praying. He is asked to be steadfast in prayer and prostration.

Acceptability of Supplication in the Posture of Prostration

It is recorded in Abū Dāwūd on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: اقرب مايكون العَبد من ربّه وهو ساجد فاكثروا الدعاء (The closest that a servant can be to his Lord is when he is in prostration. Therefore, make abundant supplications [while prostrating]) Another authentic Tradition states: فانّه قمن ان يستجاب لكم (...because it is fitting and proper that supplications be accepted in the state of prostration.)

Ruling

It is valid to supplicate in the supererogatory (*nafl*) *ṣalāh* while prostrating. In certain narrations, special words of the supplications are recorded from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is better to recite those transmitted prayers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. There is no proof or evidence of such supplications in the prostration of obligatory *ṣalāh*, because the obligatory *ṣalāh* needs to be short.

Ruling

A prostration is compulsory for one who recites this verse and listens to it. A narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ states that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to prostrate when he recited this verse. Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-'Alaq
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qadr

(The *Qadr*)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 5 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

إِنَّآ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ فِى لَيْلَةِ ٱلْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَآ أَدْرَىٰكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ ٱلْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾ لَيْلَةُ
ٱلْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾ تَنَزَّلُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَٱلرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ
رَبِّهِم مِّن كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾ سَلَٰمٌ هِىَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ ٱلْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

We have sent it (the Qur'ān) down in the Night of *Qadr*. [1] **And what may let you know what the Night of *Qadr* is?** [2] **The Night of *Qadr* is much better than one thousand months.** [3] **The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of your Lord, along with every command.** [4] **Peace it is till the rising of dawn.** [5]

Occasion of Revelation

Ibn Abī Ḥātim has reported from Mujāhid (as *mursal ḥadīth*) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was told about a *mujāhid* [warrior in the cause of religion] from amongst the Children of Israel who carried weapons of war on his shoulders for a thousand months during which time he never laid down his arms. The Companions were amazed when they heard this. On that occasion, this Sūrah was revealed which describes that worship in the Night of *Qadr* granted to this *Ummah* exceeds by more than a thousand months of *jihād* persistently fought by that warrior. According to another narration of Mujāhid cited in Ibn Jarīr, a worshipper from among the Children of Israel used to worship Allah the whole night, and

as soon as the dawn broke, he would arm himself and fight the whole day. This continued consecutively for a thousand months. This Surah was thus revealed. This shows the superiority of the *Ummah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and that the Night of *Qadr* is a special characteristic of this *ummah*. [Mazharī].

Meaning of The Night of *Qadr*

One meaning of the word *Qadr* is 'greatness, honour or dignity'. Zuhrī and other scholars have assigned this meaning to it. The night is called the Night of *Qadr* because it is a night of greatness, honour, majesty and dignity. Abū Bakr Warrāq has stated that this night is so called because a person becomes a man of honour and dignity on account of repentance, seeking pardon and righteous acts during this night, whilst prior to this he might have lacked honour and dignity on account of unrighteous life he might have led.

Another meaning of the word *Qadr* is 'predestination'. From this point of view, the night is so called because the destiny of individuals and nations that was decided in pre-eternity is assigned to the relevant angels who are appointed for cosmic planning. Every man's age, death, sustenance, rain and other things are measured out to the angels to be implemented for a complete year from one month of Ramaḍān to another. If an individual is destined to perform Ḥajj in the forthcoming year, it will be prescribed. According to Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, there are four angels in charge of cosmic planning: [1] Isrāfīl; [2] Mīkā'īl; [3] 'Izrā'īl; and [4] Jibra'īl عليهم السلام.

It is clearly stated in [44:3-5]

إِنَّآ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ فِى لَيْلَةٍ مُّبَٰرَكَةٍ ۚ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ﴿٣﴾ فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِندِنَآ ۚ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾

We have sent it down in a blessed night, (because) We had to warn (people). [3] In that (night), every wise thing is decided [4] through a command from Us. We were to send the Messenger [5]. (44:3-5)

'*Laylatun Mubārakah*' or the 'blessed', according to overwhelming scholars of the Qur'ān, refers to the Night of *Qadr*. The angels record and

descend with whatever Allah has destined or decreed for the coming year. Some scholars hold that the 'blessed night' in 44: 3 refers to the fifteenth night of *Sha'bān*, that is, '*Laylatul Barā'ah* ' or the 'Night of Immunity'. This view may be reconciled with the former one by holding that the initial Divine decrees are decided on the Night of Immunity, and the details are recorded and handed over to the relevant angels on the Night of *Qadr*. This is supported by a narration of Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ which Baghawī has recorded on the authority of Abūḍ-Ḍuḥā which states that Allah decrees all cosmic matters on the Night of Immunity, but they are only handed over to the relevant angels on the Night of *Qadr*. [Maẓharī].

Date of the Night of *Qadr*

It is explicitly stated in the Qur'ān that the Night occurs in the blessed or auspicious month of Ramaḍān, but its exact date has not been disclosed. As a result, it is disputed and debated among scholars. There are about forty opinions recorded. Maẓharī states that the most authentic opinion is that the Night of *Qadr* occurs in the last ten nights of *Ramaḍān*, but no specific date has been fixed. It could be any of the last ten odd nights which may alternate from year to year. According to authentic Traditions, it could be one of the following nights: 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29. Thus all the apparently conflicting Traditions relating to the odd nights are reconciled. All the Traditions pertaining to the date of the Night are authentic, and there is no need for any convoluted interpretation. Most eminent jurists - like Abā Qilābah, Imām Mālik, Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Sufyān Thawrī, Isḥāq Ibn Rahwaih, Abū Thawr, Muzanī, Ibn Khuzaymah and others - agree that the Night occurs in the last ten odd nights, alternating. Imām Shāfi'ī has two opinions. In one he sides with the majority, and in another he holds that the night is fixed and does not alternate. [Ibn Kathīr].

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's رضی اللہ عنہا narration is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: تحرّوا ليلة القدرفى العشر الاوَاخر من رمضان "Look for the Night of *Qadr* in the last ten nights of Ramaḍān." Ibn 'Umar ﷺ narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: فاطلبوها فى الوتر منها "Search for it in the last ten odd nights of Ramaḍān." [Maẓharī].

The Value and Importance of the Night and a Special Du'ā for the Night

The greatest virtue of the Night is mentioned in the Sūrah itself, that is, the acts of worship performed in this single night is better than worship in one thousand months which amounts to eighty-three years and four months. The figure here and elsewhere in the Qur'ān does not signify its precise number, but simply denotes a very large or high number. Allah alone knows how much more or better.

It is recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﵁ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who spends the Night of *Qadr* in the worship of Allah, all his past sins will be forgiven." Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵁ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "All the angels resident at the 'Lote Tree of the Uttermost Boundary' descend in the leadership of Sayyidnā Jibra'īl ﵇ and greet every believer, man or woman, except one who takes wine or eats pork." Another narration reports that anyone who is deprived of the good of the Night of *Qadr* is in fact deprived of all good. On the Night of *Qadr* some people experience and witness special *anwār* [lights]. However, it may be noted that this is not experienced or witnessed by all and sundry nor is it part of the blessings and reward of the Night. Therefore, people should not concern themselves about it.

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا once asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ what supplication she should make if she finds the Night. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised her to make the following supplication: اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّکَ عَفُوٌّ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّیْ "O Allah! Verily, You are the Oft-Pardoning, You love to pardon, so do pardon me." [Qurṭubī].

Revelation of the Holy Qur'ān

Verse [1] اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِیْ لَیْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ " We sent it [the Qur'ān] down in the Night of *Qadr*."This verse makes explicit that the Holy Qur'ān was revealed on the Night of *Qadr*. This could have one of two meanings: [1] the entire Holy Qur'ān was revealed on this Night from the Preserved Tablet. Then Sayyidnā Jibra'īl ﵇, according to the exigency of circumstances, brought it down to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ piecemeal over a period of twenty-three years; and [2] it is related that the first revelation,

consisting of the opening verses of Sūrah [96], took place in the month of Ramaḍān on the Night of *Qadr*, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was at his devotion in the cave of Ḥirā'. The rest of the Qur'ān was revealed little by little according to the need of different occasions.

All Heavenly Books were revealed in Ramaḍān

Sayyidnā Abū Dhar Ghifārī رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm's عليه السلام Scriptures were revealed on 3rd of Ramaḍān; Torah was revealed on 6th of Ramaḍān; Injīl was revealed on 13th of Ramaḍān; Zabūr was revealed on 18th of Ramaḍān; and the Holy Qur'ān was revealed on 24th of Ramaḍān." [Maẓharī].

Descent of the Angels and the Spirit with Divine Decrees

Verse [4] تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَالرُّوْحُ (The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of their Lord, along with every command.) 'Spirit' here refers to Jibra'īl عليه السلام.

Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When the Night of *Qadr* occurs, Jibra'īl عليه السلام descends on the earth with a huge throng of angels and all of them pray for every servant of Allah, man or woman, busy in *ṣalāh* or *dhikr*, to be blessed by Allah." [Maẓharī]. In the phrase مِنْ كُلِّ اَمْرٍ (along with every command), the preposition *min* is used in the sense of 'with' as in [13:11] يَحْفَظُوْنَهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِاللّٰهِ' The verse under comment means the angels bring down, during the Night of *Qadr*, the decree for everything destined to occur in the coming year. Some of the commentators, like Mujāhid and others, say that the phrase مِنْ كُلِّ اَمْرٍ *min kulli amrin* is syntactically related to *salām*, and the word *'Amr* means 'every thing'. Thus they interpret the statement to mean: 'The night is a security from every evil, harm and calamity.' [Ibn Kathīr].

Verse [5] سَلٰمٌ (Peace it is till the rising of dawn.) The word Salām [peace] stands for a complete sentence meaning 'it is all peace, equanimity and complete goodness, having no evil in it.' [Qurṭubī]. Some scholars treat the word *Salāmun* as a sentence qualifying مِنْ كُلِّ اَمْرٍ *min kulli amrin,* meaning 'the angels come with every such matter which is good and peace'. [Maẓharī].

هِيَ حَتّٰى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ The concluding expression of the verse means the blessings of the Night of *Qadr* are not restricted to any particular part of

the night. They start descending at the fall of night and continue till the break of dawn.

Special Note

According to there verse 'The Night of Power is better than a thousand months' which equals eighty-three years and four months. Obviously, each year will contain a *laylatul Qadr* which will be better than a thousand months. As a result, the Night of *Qadr* will recur *ad infinitum*, that is, repeat or continue without an end. For this reason, some of the commentators say the expression 'more than a thousand months' does not include nights of *Qadr*. Thus this should not pose any problem. [Ibn Kathīr on the authority of Mujāhid].

On account of geographical positions, the time will vary from place to place. As a result, the Night of *Qadr* will not occur in all the regions of the world simultaneously. This is not a problem because people of each location should calculate and consecrate the night and receive its blessings according to their geographical position. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Ruling

If anyone performs the 'Ishā' and Fajr *ṣalāhs* in congregation, he will receive the blessings and reward of the Night of *Qadr*. The more one performs acts of worship in this night, the more he shall receive its blessings. It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "If a person performs his 'Ishā' *ṣalāh* in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending half the night in devotion; and if he performs Fajr *ṣalāh* in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending the entire night in devotion."

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qadr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Bayyinah
(The Clear Proof)

This Sūrah is Madani, and it has 8 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ وَالْمُشْرِكِيْنَ مُنْفَكِّيْنَ حَتّٰى
تَاْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ﴿١﴾ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ يَتْلُوْا صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً ﴿٢﴾ فِيْهَا
كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ ﴿٣﴾ وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ
مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَآ اُمِرُوْٓا اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ
حُنَفَآءَ وَيُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَذٰلِكَ دِيْنُ الْقَيِّمَةِ ﴿٥﴾ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ وَالْمُشْرِكِيْنَ فِيْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ
فِيْهَا اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴿٦﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴿٧﴾ جَزَآؤُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِيْ
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ
ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهٗ ﴿٨﴾

Those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book, and the polytheists, were not (expected) to desist (from their wrong beliefs) unless there came to them a clear proof, [1] a messenger from Allah who recites the

purified scrolls [2] containing (right and) straight writings. [3] And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after the clear proof came to them, [4] while they were not ordered but to worship Allah, making their submission exclusive for him with integrity, and to establish *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh*. And that is the way of the straight religion. [5] Surely those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book and the polytheists will be in the fire of Jahannam, in which they will be living forever. Those are the worst of all human beings. [6] As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they are the best of all human beings. [7] Their reward, with their Lord, is gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow in which they will be abiding forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. That is for him who has awe of his Lord. [8]

Situation of the People of the Book and of the Pagan Arabs before the advent of the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ

Verse [1] draws attention to the situation of the world before the advent of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: The entire world was sunk deeply in the darkness of ignorance, superstition, corruption, disbelief and paganism. When the whole world was so benighted, the infinite grace, mercy and wisdom of the Lord of the worlds bubbled up to dispel the darkness, to cure the obnoxious diseases and to dissipate the universally prevailing calamities. The moral and spiritual maladies were acute, excruciating, serious and severe. As a result, there was a need for an effective, expert and a competent healer who would be able to cure them. Such a healer was raised in the person of the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ who is described as *al-Bayyinah* 'The Clear Proof'. The healer came with a Book. Now follows some of the important characteristics of the Holy Qur'ān.

Verses [2-3] يَتْلُوا صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً. فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ (a messenger from Allah who recites the purified scrolls containing [right and] straight writings. - 98:2,3) The verb *yatlū* is derived from the infinitive *tilāwah*, meaning 'to read out or to recite'. However, not every reading or reciting is *tilāwah*, but only the one that is very closely followed according to the teacher's instruction. Probably, this is the reason why the word *tilāwah* is specifically used, in common idiom, for 'the recitation of the noble Qur'ān'

. The word *ṣuḥuf* is the plural of *ṣaḥīfah* and it refers to 'a leaf or a page of a book or some leaves of paper on which something is written'. The word *kutūb* is the plural of *kitāb* and it may mean: [1] a leaf or page of a book or some leaves of paper on which something is written. From this point of view, the words *kutūb* and *ṣuḥuf* are synonyms; or [2] now and then the word *kitāb* [pl. *kutūb*] is used in the sense of a 'writ ' as in [8:68] لَوْلَا كِتٰبٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ سَبَقَ "Had there not been a writ from Allah which came earlier..." the word *kitāb* is used in the sense of a 'writ'. In this context, the second sense seems to fit in more appropriately because if it is taken in the first sense, the words *kutūb* and *ṣuḥuf*, being synonyms, the prepositional phrase *fīhā* is rendered meaningless. The pronoun *-hā* in the phrase refers to *ṣuḥuf* , and the two statements would mean: 'reciting purified written pages in which are true written pages'. This is not in keeping with the lofty rules and principles of Qur'ānic eloquence.

The word مُطَهَّرَةً *muṭahharatan* [purified] is an adjective qualifying the noun *ṣuḥuf* [pages/scrolls]. According to Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, the Scriptures are completely free from all possible flaws, forgeries, doubt, hypocrisy and deviations. The word *qayyimah* is used in the sense of 'straight', and is the adjective of the noun *kutūb*, and it means its laws, ordinances and injunctions are upright, straight, just and balanced. It could also mean 'lasting and permanent'. In this instance, the phrase would signify that the Divine injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān will last permanently till the Day of Judgement. The verse thus purports to say that the sending of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ [as the Clear Proof] was essential to the transformation of the people of earlier revelations and the pagans who had ended up in disbelief and could not have departed from their erring ways without the help of his ﷺ Prophetic mission. His ﷺ mission was to recite the pure scrolls to them which contained clear Divine injunctions. Initially he ﷺ did not recite from the Scriptures but from his memory, but the sense here is that he recited to them a discourse that was later written and preserved in scrolls. The Qur'ān [as the Clear Proof] is the compendium of all that is good, lasting and immutable teachings.

Verse [4] وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ (And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after the Clear Proof came to them.) The verb *tafarraqa* here means 'to deny, reject or differ and disagree'. The

verse means to say that the People of the Book had eagerly awaited the advent of a great Holy Prophet ﷺ about whom clear prophecies were found in their Scriptures, clear description of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was given, in that the Qur'ān would descend upon him and it would be compulsory for them to obey and follow him, but when he appeared in fact, then instead of accepting him, they rejected him. The Qur'ān points out that there was a complete agreement among the Jews and the Christians that the Final Messenger ﷺ will make his appearance, as in [2:89] وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا "...while earlier, they used to seek help against those who disbelieved..." That is, the Torah had in several places foretold the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In fact, the Jews themselves used to tell the pagan Arabs that a new Prophet was soon to come who will vanquish them, and the Jews claimed that they would be with him, so they would be victorious. Further in [2:89] the Qur'ān states فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ مَّا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ "...yet when there came to them that they did identify, they denied it... ". The phrase 'that they did identify' could refer to the 'Final Messenger' ﷺ or the 'new Divine Book [the Qur'ān]' or the 'religion of Truth'. The same theme runs through the verse under comment: Many people accepted the new Prophet ﷺ, the new Book and the new religion in terms of the prophecies made in their revealed Scriptures, but a large number, especially the Christians, rejected them. It is a strange phenomenon that before his advent they believed in him without a single dissenting voice, but when he appeared as the Clear Proof, dissention arose and a large number rejected him while a small number believed in him.

Since this phenomenon was restricted to the People of the Book, it did not include the pagans, unlike verse [1] which includes the pagans also. Allah knows best!

Verse [5] وَذٰلِكَ دِيْنُ الْقَيِّمَةِ (And that is the way of the straight religion.) The word *qayyimah* [the straight] is apparently the qualifier of the noun *kutūb* [Books] which occurred earlier. Some treat the adjective as qualifying the noun *millah* [religion]. The verse purports to say that Allah commanded the People of the former Scriptures that they should render full and sincere obedience to Divine commandments, that is, to worship Allah alone. They should also establish the regular prayers and

pay the obligatory alms. Then the Qur'ān reminds them that this is not their distinctive feature exclusively. All former religions that are upright and received Books from Allah have the same features. This is the true religion of all the Prophets ﷺ that they preached to their respective people. It would appear that the phrase *kutubun qayyimah* [(right and) straight writings], contextually, refers to the Qur'ānic ordinances and injunctions. From this point of view, the verse would signify that the ordinances and injunctions of the Sharī'ah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ are exactly the same as those that were given to them in their revealed Scriptures. They were not divergent so that they could find a pretext to oppose.

Verse [8] 'رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ ۭ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهٗ' (Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him; that is for him who fears his Lord.) This verse points to the highest stage of spiritual development of the inmates of Paradise, that is, the Divine pleasure with no danger of Divine displeasure. This is the greatest reward with which the people of faith will be blessed. The God-fearing people are well-pleased with Him because of the comprehensive favours He has given them. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudrī رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

> "Undoubtedly, Allah shall address the inmates of Paradise: يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ 'O Inmates of Paradise!' "
>
> They will reply: لَبَّيْكَ رَبَّنَا وَسَعْدَيْكَ وَالْخَيْرُ كُلُّه' فِيْ يَدَيْكَ Our Lord, we are present and ready to carry out Your orders. All good is in Your control.'
>
> Allah shall ask them: هَلْ رَضِيْتُمْ Are you happy?'
>
> They will submit: 'How can we not be happy when You have given us what You have not bestowed on any of Your creation? '
>
> Allah will tell them: 'Shall I not grant you something superior to all of this?'
>
> They will exclaim: 'What can be superior to this?'
>
> Allah will reply: 'I shall grant you My pleasure, and I will never be angry with you in the future.'". [Transmitted by al-Bukhārī vide Maẓharī].

It should be noted here that there are two types of *riḍā'* [pleasure]:

one in general sense; and second in specific or higher sense. In the general sense, *riḍā' bil-qadr* (i.e. to be pleased with every decree of Allah) is part of the obligations of a servant of Allah. A consummated slave is only ever satisfied and content with Allah Himself, and thus sincerely accepts the Divine decree. However, here the word is used in the higher sense, that is, Allah bestows upon a slave all his specific wishes and ambitions without leaving out any of them as in [93:5] وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضٰى (And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased.) Here also the word '*riḍā*' means the fulfillment of every wish of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ expressed his wish and ambition that he would not be pleased until every single believer is taken out of Hell. [Maẓharī]

Verse [8 - the concluding phrase] 'ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهٗ (...That is for him who has awe of his Lord.) The word 'fear' or 'awe' here is not used in the sense of an 'agitated, disturbed or perturbed feeling' which we naturally have for an enemy, a beast, a ferocious animal or an obnoxious thing that might harm us. '*Khashyatullah*' (Allah's awe) is, on the contrary, a feeling of deep, reverential awe that leads man to Allah's obedience. It is the awe of Allah's Majesty and His Incomparability that makes the perfect slave do every work under every circumstance to attain the Divine pleasure and evade every occasion of His displeasure. This is the axis on which rotates the religious perfection and all bounties of the Hereafter.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Bayyinah
Ends here

Sūrah Az-Zilzal

(The Quake)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 8 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْاَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ﴿١﴾ وَاَخْرَجَتِ الْاَرْضُ اَثْقَالَهَا ﴿٢﴾ وَقَالَ
الْاِنْسَانُ مَالَهَا ﴿٣﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ اَخْبَارَهَا ﴿٤﴾ بِاَنَّ رَبَّكَ اَوْحٰى لَهَا
﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّصْدُرُ النَّاسُ اَشْتَاتًا ۙ لِّيُرَوْا اَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ
مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَّرَهٗ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَّرَهٗ ﴿٨﴾

When the earth will be trembled with its quake, [1] **and the earth will bring forth its burdens,** [2] **and man will say, "What has happened to it?"** [3] **That day it will describe all its happenings,** [4] **because its Lord will have so commanded it.** [5] **That day the people will come back (from the place of reckoning) in different groups, so that they may be shown (the fruits of) their deeds.** [6] **So, whoever does good (even) to the weight of a particle shall see it.** [7] **And whoever does evil (even) to the weight of a particle shall see it.** [8]

The Merits of Surah Az-Zilzal

Sayyidnā Anas and Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهم report that the Messenger of Allah said that Sūrah Al-Zilzāl equals half the Qur'ān, Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ equals a third of the Qur'ān and Sūrah Al-Kāfirun equals a quarter of the Qur'ān. [Transmitted by al-Tirmidhī, al-Baghawī and al-Maẓharī].

The Scene of the Day of Resurrection

Verse [1] إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا (When the earth will be trembled with its quake.) It is not clear whether this earthquake refers to the convulsion that will take place in the world before the 'first blowing of the trumpet', as is mentioned in connection with the portents of the Doomsday, or it refers to the quake that will occur after the 'second blowing' when the dead bodies will be resurrected and thrown out of their graves. Narratives and views of the commentators differ on this issue. It is not inconceivable that many quakes and convulsions would occur: first, before the 'first blowing'; and second, after the 'second blowing' at the time of raising the dead. Here it probably refers to the second quake, and the context supports it, because the Sūrah later on describes the scenes of the Day of Resurrection, such as reckoning, weighing and evaluating of deeds, and recompense . Allah knows best. [Maẓharī]

Verse [2] وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا (and the earth will bring forth its burdens.) Muslim has recorded in his Ṣaḥīḥ from Abū Hurairah ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"The earth will throw out the pieces of its liver [contents]. Gold and silver will come out like columns. A murderer will come and say: 'I killed for this ?' The one who broke the ties of kinship will say: 'For this I severed the ties of kinship?' The thief will say: 'For this I got my hand amputated?' Then they will leave it there, and no one will take anything from it."

Verse [7] فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (So, whoever does good [even] to the weight of a particle shall see it.) The word 'good' here refers to what is good in terms of Sharī'ah, that is, only a good deed done in the wake of faith is recognized by Allah. Any good deed done in the state of disbelief is not recognized, and consequently it will not be rewarded in the Hereafter, though it might have been rewarded in this world. It is argued on the basis of this verse that anyone who has an atom's weight of faith will eventually be taken out of Hell. The reason being that, according to the promise made in this verse, man must reap the fruit of his righteousness in the Hereafter. If he has not done any righteous deeds, faith itself is a great righteousness. Thus no matter how sinful a believer may be, he will

not be condemned to Hell for good. On the other hand, if a non-believer has done tons of good deeds, they will be rendered vain in the Hereafter on account of lack of faith. He will, however, receive reward for them here in this world.

Verse [8] 'وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَّرَه' (And Whoever does evil [even] to the weight of a particle shall see it.) By 'evil' here is meant the evil for which the evil-doer has not repented. The Qur'ān and the Sunnah bear ample testimony to the fact that any sinner who sincerely repents for his sins Allah will most certainly accept his repentance. However, the sins for which the sinners have not repented in this world shall certainly bring their results, no matter how trivial or petty they might have been in their appearance. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها to beware of the sins that are belittled, for indeed they will be taken account of by Allah." [Transmitted by Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah].

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه says that this verse is most robust and comprehensive verse of the Holy Qur'ān. Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه in a lengthy narration reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ referred to this verse as الفاذة الجامعه "the unique, most comprehensive verse".

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Az-Zilzāl
Ends here

Sūrah 'Al-Ādiyāt

(The Running Horses)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 11 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

وَالْعٰدِيٰتِ ضَبْحًا ﴿١﴾ فَالْمُوْرِيٰتِ قَدْحًا ﴿٢﴾ فَالْمُغِيْرٰتِ صُبْحًا ﴿٣﴾
فَاَثَرْنَ بِهٖ نَقْعًا ﴿٤﴾ فَوَسَطْنَ بِهٖ جَمْعًا ﴿٥﴾ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهٖ لَكَنُوْدٌ
﴿٦﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ عَلٰى ذٰلِكَ لَشَهِيْدٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيْدٌ ﴿٨﴾ اَفَلَا
يَعْلَمُ اِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِى الْقُبُوْرِ ﴿٩﴾ وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِى الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿١٠﴾ اِنَّ
رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيْرٌ ﴿١١﴾

I swear by those (horses) that run snorting, [1] then those that create sparks by striking (their hoofs) on the stones, [2] then those that invade at morning, [3] and raise a trail of dust therein, [4] then enter, at the same time, into the centre of the (opposing) host, [5] man is, indeed, very ungrateful to his Lord, [6] and he himself is a witness to that fact. [7] And in his love for wealth, he is very intense. [8] Does he not then know (what will happen) when all that is contained in the graves will be overturned, [9] and all that is contained in the hearts will be exposed. [10] Surely your Lord, that day, will be fully aware of them. [11]

Place of Revelation

According to Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd, Jābir, Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Ikramah and

'Aṭā' رحمهم الله تعالی, Sūrah Al-'Ādiyāt was revealed in Makkah and, according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Anas, Imām Mālik and Qatādah, the Sūrah was revealed in Madīnah. [Qurṭubī].

In this Sūrah Allah describes the special features of war-horses or chargers, and swears by them. The subject of the oath states that man is very ungrateful to his Lord. It has been explained time and again previously that it is the prerogative of Allah to swear oath by any of his creatures to recount an event or set down ordinances. It is not permitted for any of the human beings to take oath by any of the creatures. The purpose of swearing an oath is to confirm or give weight to a subsequently stated truth. It is also mentioned earlier that when the Holy Qur'ān swears an oath by an object, it has some nexus with the subject of the oath. Here the hard tasks of the war-horses are called to bear testimony to the fact that man is very ungrateful for Allah's favours. In other words, man needs to look at the horses, especially the war-horses, who risk their lives to travel under very dangerous and difficult conditions, especially in the battlefields where they follow the commands of their masters, whereas man has not created them, he has not even created the fodder he gives to them. His task is merely to give them the fodder that Allah has created. The horses recognize and acknowledge this little favor man does to them, and are prepared to risk their lives and bear the greatest of hardships. As against this, Allah has created man with an insignificant drop of sperm and endowed him with high faculties, abilities, intellect and senses to perform various types of tasks, thus making him the crown of His creation. He [Allah] provided him with all types of food. Facilities are created for all his needs and necessities in an amazing manner. But man does not recognize and acknowledge any of these sublime favors, nor does he express his gratitude to his Creator.

Lexicographical Analysis

The word عَادِيَات *'ādiyāt* is derived from the root *'adw'* which means 'to run'. The ضَبْح *dabh* means 'the sound coming out of the chest of a horse when it runs fast and breathes laboriously; panting.' The word مُورِيَات *mūriyāt* is the active participle of the infinitive of إِيرَاء *'īrā'*. The infinitive means 'to strike or produce fire with a particular piece of wood.' The word قَدْح *qadh* means 'to strike or produce fire with a flint; striking sparks of

fire when the horse runs fast on a rocky ground with horse-shoes on'. The word مُغِيرَات *mughīrāt* is active participle of the infinitive إِغَارَة *ighārah*. The infinitive means 'to attack, or make a sudden hostile excursion upon, an enemy'. The word *ṣubḥ* means 'morning or dawn'. This time has been specifically mentioned because it was the practice of Arabs to attack their enemy at dawn, and not at night in order to show off their bravery. They thought making a hostile excursion on the enemy in the darkness of night was an act of cowardice. The word أَثَرْنَ *atharna* is derived from *'ithārah,* which means 'to raise dust'. The word نَقْع *naq'* means 'dust'. This implies that the dust became stirred up and spread upon the horizon, especially in the morning when the horses run fast. Normally, this is not the time for clouds of dust to fly in this way, unless it was caused by very fast running.

Verse [100:5] فَوَسَطْنَ بِهٖ جَمْعًا (then enter, at the same time, into the centre of the [opposing] host) In other words, they penetrate into the centre of the enemy forces without the least degree of fear.

The word *kanūd*, (100:6) according to Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى, refers to the one who counts the calamities that befall him, and forgets Allah's favours. Abū Bakr Wāsiṭī said that *kanūd* is the one who spends the bounties of Allah for sinful purposes. Tirmidhi said that *kanūd* is the one who looks at the bounty, and not at the Bounteous Lord. In short, all these interpretations lead to the sense of 'ungratefulness to favours and bounties' and hence the expression *kanūd* means 'ungrateful'.

Verse [100:8] وَاِنَّهٗ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيْدٌ (and in his love for wealth, he is very intense.) Literally, the word *khair* means 'any good thing'. Idiomatically, the word *khair,* in Arabic, means 'wealth' implying that 'wealth' is an embodiment of goodness and benefit. However, some type of wealth can involve man in untold misery. In the Hereafter, this will be the position of all wealth acquired through unlawful means. Sometimes, wealth in this world too can prove to be nuisance and disaster. Nonetheless, according to Arabic idiom, worldly goods in this verse have been described as *khair* as the same word in another verse [2:180] اِنْ تَرَکَ خَيْرًا "...he leaves some wealth...". In this verse as well the word *khair* means 'wealth'.

To recap, having taken oath by war-horses, the subject states two

points: [1] man is ungrateful or he is a blamer of his Lord who remembers misfortunes and forgets His favours; and [2] he is passionate in his love for wealth. Both these points are evil, rationally as well as from the Sharī'ah point of view. These statements warn man against these evils. The evil of ingratitude is quite obvious and needs no elaboration, but the evil of man's violent love for wealth is not that obvious, and needs some elaboration. Wealth is the axis of man's needs and necessities. Shari'ah has not only permitted its acquisition, but it has also made its acquisition obligatory to the degree of his needs. Therefore, what is condemned in the verse is either the 'intense' or excessive love for wealth that makes one neglectful to one's obligations, and oblivious of the divine injunctions, or the sense is that earning wealth, even saving it according to one's needs is though permissible, having its love in the heart is bad. Let us consider the following illustration: When man feels the need to answer the call of nature, he does it out of necessity. In fact, he makes arrangements for it, but he does not develop love or passion for it in his heart. Likewise, when he falls sick and takes medication, or even undergoes surgery, but he does not develop attachment for it in his heart. He does it only out of necessity. The believer should treat the wealth in this way: A believer should acquire wealth, as Allah has commanded him, to the extent of his need, save it, look after it and utilize it whenever and wherever necessary, but his heart should not be attached to it. How elegantly Maulānā Rūmī رحمه الله تعالیٰ has put it in one of his verses!

آب اندر زیر کشتی پُشتی است...... آب در کشتی هلاك کشتی است

"As long as the water remains under the boat, it helps the boat [to sail]; but if the water seeps into the boat, it sinks it."

Likewise, as long as the wealth floats around the boat of heart, it would be useful; but when it seeps into the heart, it will destroy it. Towards the conclusion of the Sūrah a warning has been sounded against these two evil qualities of man for which he will be punished in the Hereafter.

Verses [100:9-11] اَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ اِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَافِى الْقُبُوْرِ وَحُصِّلَ مَافِى الصُّدُوْرِ. اِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيْرٌ (Does he not then know [what will happen] when all that is contained in the graves will be overturned, and all that is contained in the hearts will

be exposed. Surely your Lord, that day, is fully aware of them.) Divine retribution will be meted out, in the Hereafter, to each person commensurate with his deeds, good or bad, as Allah is well-aware of them. Therefore, it would be wise for man to abstain from ingratitude, and he should not have such a violently passionate love for wealth and indulgence in worldly riches as to be unable to separate the good from the bad.

Special Note

The current set of verses describes these evil qualities of man in general terms, while Prophets عليهم السلام, friends of Allah and many of His righteous servants are free from these evil qualities or from any earthly attachments. They acquire wealth through lawful means and abstain from acquiring it through unlawful means. They are ever so grateful to Allah for the wealth He has given them and spend it in the way of Allah. So how these evils are attributed to man in general terms? The answer is that most people have these evil qualities, but this does not imply that all, without any exception, are characterized by these qualities. The upright people are excluded from the general statement. Some of the scholars restrict the word 'man' to 'unbelievers'. These two evil qualities are the essential characteristics of unbelievers, and if they are found in a Muslim [God forbid!], he needs to reflect and be careful. Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-'Adiyāt
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah
(The Striking Event)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 11 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

اَلْقَارِعَةُ ﴿١﴾ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ﴿٣﴾ يَوْمَ يَكُوْنُ
النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوْثِ ﴿٤﴾ وَتَكُوْنُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوْشِ
﴿٥﴾ فَاَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ ﴿٦﴾ فَهُوَ فِيْ عِيْشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾ وَاَمَّا
مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ ﴿٨﴾ فَاُمُّهٗ هَاوِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا هِيَهْ ﴿١٠﴾ نَارٌ
حَامِيَةٌ ﴿١١﴾

The Striking Event! [1] **What is the Striking Event?** [2] **And what may let you know what the Striking Event is?** [3] **(It will happen) on a day when people will be like scattered moths,** [4] **and the mountains will be like carded wool.** [5] **Then, the one whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy** [6] **will be in a happy life.** [7] **But he whose scales are light,** [8] **his abode will be Abyss.** [9] **And what may let you know what that (Abyss) is?** [10] **A blazing fire!** [11]

Human Deeds, Good or Bad, will be Weighed

This Sūrah mentions the weighing of human deeds. He whose scales are heavy will be led to Paradise, and he whose scales are light will be led to Hell. Please see Mā'ariful Qur'ān, Vol. 3/ pp 539-547, for a full and complete analysis of the Weighing of human deeds. The analysis also

allays the doubts raised against the concept of weighing of deeds.

We have also explained there that it appears from reconciliation of conflicting narrations and Qur'ānic verses that the weighing on Plain of Resurrection will take place twice. The first weighing will be to separate the believers from the non-believers. Anyone whose Book of Deeds is put on the scale and contains the belief (*'Īmān*) will be heavy, and the scale of anyone whose Ledger of Deeds does not contain *'Īmān* will be light. At this stage, the believers will be separated from the non-believers. Weighing on the second time will be to distinguish between good and evil deeds of the believers. The reference, in the present Sūrah, is probably to the first weighing in which the scale of every believer will be heavy regardless of his other deeds, while the scale of an unbeliever will be light, even though he might have performed some good acts.

It is explained in Maẓharī that the Holy Qur'ān generally contrasts the unbelievers and righteous believers, when speaking of retribution [reward or punishment], because the latter are the perfect believers. As for the believers who have performed righteous as well as unrighteous deeds, the Qur'ān is generally silent on the issue. However, the principle may be noted that on the Day of Judgement human deeds will not be counted, but weighed. Fewer good deeds with high degree of faith and sincerity, and in accordance with Sunnah will be heavier than many good deeds - prayers, fasting, charity and pilgrimage with lesser degree of faith and sincerity, or not completely in accordance with Sunnah.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah
Ends here

Sūrah At-Takāthur

(Competition in Amassing)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 8 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

أَلْهٰكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ ﴿١﴾ حَتّٰى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ﴿٢﴾ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ
﴿٣﴾ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِيْنِ ﴿٥﴾
لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ ﴿٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِيْنِ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ لَتُسْئَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ
عَنِ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٨﴾

You are distracted by mutual competition in amassing (worldly benefits), [1] **until you reach the graves.** [2] **No! (This is not a correct attitude.) You will soon know (the reality).** [3] **Again, you will soon know.** [4] **No! if you have had sure knowledge (of the Hereafter, you would not have been so distracted)** [5] **You will certainly see the Hell,** [6] **then you will see it with an eye of certainty.** [7] **Then you will be asked about all the pleasures (you enjoyed in the world).** [8]

Special Merit of Sūrah At-Takāthur

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have once asked the noble Companions: "Is there anyone from amongst you who has the strength to recite one thousand verses a day?" The blessed Companions replied: "Who can recite a thousand verses a day? " The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Can you not recite Sūrah At-Takāthur?" This implies that Sūrah At-Takāthur equals in weight and worth to a thousand verses, thus stressing its great

importance. [Maẓharī with reference to Ḥākim and Baihaqī on the authority of Ibn 'Umar ﷺ].

Warning Against Materialistic Attitude

Verse [1] اَلْهٰكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ (You are distracted by mutual competition in amassing [worldly benefits].) The word *takāthur* is derived from the root *kathrah,* and means 'to amass much wealth'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى have assigned this interpretation to it. Qatādah ﷺ says that this word is also used in the sense of 'taking pride in the abundance of material goods'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited this verse and explained its meaning, thus: "Acquiring wealth but not paying out of it the obligatory dues." [Qurṭubī].

Verse [2] حَتّٰى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ (until you reach the graves.) Here the words 'reaching the graves' mean 'to die and be buried in the graves', as the following Prophetic Ḥadīth bears testimony to this interpretation. Referring to verse [2] of this Sūrah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: حتّٰى يأتيكم الموت "until death overtakes you" [Ibn Kathīr, from by Ibn Abī Ḥātim]. The verse thus implies that many people are engrossed in acquiring worldly goods and racing each other in wealth and children etc. and remain neglectful of the Hereafter till death comes upon them, and then they are seized by the divine punishment. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Shikhkhīr ﷺ reports that one day he visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ while the latter was reciting Sūrah At-Takāthur and was saying:

يقول ابن آدم مالى مالى وهل لك من مالك الاّ ما اكلت فافنيت اولبست فابليت
اوتصدّقت فامضيت، وفى روايةلمسلم وما سوىٰ ذٰلك فذاهب وتاركه للناس.

(ابن كثيرو قرطبى برو ايت مسلم،ترمذى احمد)

"The Son of 'Ādam says: 'My wealth, my wealth.' But you do not reap any benefit from your wealth except for that which you ate and you finished it, or that which you clothed yourself with and you wore it out, or that which you gave as charity and you have spent it."

And in a narration by Muslim: "Everything else other than that will go away, and he will leave it for other people.(i.e. inheritors)" [Ibn Kathīr and Qurṭubī as transmitted by Muslim, Tirmidhī and Aḥmad].

Imām Bukhārī records from Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ that the Messenger of

Allah ﷺ said:

لو كان لابن ادم واديًا من ذهب لاحبّ ان يكون له واديان ولن يملاء فاه الاّ التراب و يتوب الله على من تاب.

"If the Son of 'Ādam has a valley of gold, he would love to have two valleys, and nothing but the dust of grave will fill his mouth. And Allah accepts the repentance of him who turns to Him in penitence."

Sayyidnā 'Ubayy Ibn Ka'b ؓ, referring to the Tradition quoted above, says, "We used to think that this was a part of the Qur'ān until the first verse of Sūrah At-Takāthur was revealed." It seems that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verse and interpreted it in his own words. As a result, some of the Companions were under the impression that the Prophetic words were part of the Qur'ān. Later on, when the Sūrah was recited in its entirety, it did not contain the Prophetic words. This made them realize that the Prophetic words were actually of explanatory nature, and not part of the Qur'ān.

Verse [102:5] كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ (No! if you have had sure knowledge..) The word 'if' requires a principal clause that seems missing here, but the context suggests that the sense is the following: "If you had the sure knowledge of accountability on the Day of Judgement, you would not have engrossed yourselves in mutual competition in acquiring worldly goods and taking pride in their abundance."

Verse [102:7] ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (...then you will see it with an eye of certainty.) The phrase '*'ain-ul-yaqīn*' (translated above as'eye of certainty') refers to the certainty attained by physical observation, and this is the highest degree of certainty. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ reports that when Holy Prophet Mūsā ؑ was on the mount of Ṭūr, his people started worshipping a calf. Allah informed him about this while he was still on the mountain. This piece of information did not affect Mūsā ؑ so much. However, when he returned and saw the Children of Israel, with his own eyes, worshipping the calf, he became so indignant that the tablets of Torah involuntarily fell from his hands. [Transmitted by Aḥmad and Ṭabarāni with an authentic chain of narrators, as quoted by Maẓharī].

Verse [102:8] ثُمَّ لَتُسْئَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ (Then you will be asked about all the pleasures [you enjoyed in the world].) This means that, on the Day of

Judgment, all of you will be questioned whether you had shown gratitude towards Allah's favors, or did you misuse them and were ungrateful to Allah? Some of these favors and bounties are explicitly mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'ān:

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

(...Surely, the ear, the eye and the heart - each one of them shall be interrogated about.) [17:36]

These organs and their faculties comprehend millions of blessings of Allah, and man will be questioned as to how he used them every moment of his life.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that first question that will be put by Allah to every person is: "Did I not give you good health, and did I not give you cold water to quench your thirst?" (Tirmidhī, and Ibn Ḥibbān, with rating as *ṣaḥīḥ*, from Abū Hurairah ؓ, as quoted by Ibn Kathīr)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is also reported to have said that no man will be able to move from his place unless he answers five questions: [1] How did he spend his life?; [2] In what pursuits did he expend his youthful energy?; [3] How did he earn his wealth - (by lawful means or unlawful means?); [4] Where did he spend his wealth - (in lawful ways or unlawful ways?;) and [5] Did he act upon the knowledge Allah gave him? (Bukhārī).

Mujāhid, the leading authority on Tafsīr, says that this question on the Day of Judgement relates to every delight of the world that he enjoyed - whether it is in connection with food, clothes, house, wife, children, kingdom, government or honor. Qurṭubī, having cited this, concludes that this is absolutely true, because the question does not specify any particular blessing.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Takāthur
Ends here

Sūrah Al-'Aṣr
(The Time)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 3 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾

I swear by the Time, [1] **man is in a state of loss indeed,** [2] **except those who believed and did righteous deeds, and advised each other for truth, and advised each other for patience.** [3]

Virtue of [Studying] Sūrah al-'Aṣr

Sayyidnā 'Ubaidullāh Ibn Ḥiṣn ﷺ reports that whenever two Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ met, they would not part company until one of them had recited Sūrah Al-'Aṣr in its entirety to the other. [Transmitted by At-Ṭabarānī]. Imām Shāfi'ī says that if people thought about Sūrah Al-'Aṣr carefully, it would be enough for their guidance. It is a concise but comprehensive Sūrah, which in three verses, outlines a complete way of human life based on the Islamic worldview.

In this Sūrah, Allah swears an oath by the 'Time' and says that mankind is in a state of loss; exception, however, is made of people who are characterized by four qualities: [1] faith; [2] righteous deeds; [3] advising each other for Truth; and [4] advising each other for patience. This is the only path to salvation in this world, as well as in the next world. The Qur'ānic prescription comprises, as we have just seen, of four

elements. The first two of them relate to man's own personal betterment, and the other two relate to other people's guidance and reform. [Ibn Kathīr].

Relationship between 'Time' and 'Human Loss'

The first point we need to analyze here is the relationship between the 'oath of time' and 'its subject' because there needs to be a relationship between an 'oath' and its 'subject' The commentators, generally, state that all conditions of man, his growth and development, his movements, his actions and morality - all take place within the space of 'Time'. Man will lose the capital of his existence. Hours, days, months, and years of life pass quickly, spiritual and material potentialities decline, and abilities fade. Man is like a person who possesses great capital and, without his permission and will, every day, a portion of that capital is taken away. This is the nature of life in this world; the nature of continual loss. How well this has been put poetically:

حياتك أنفاس تعد فكلما........................ مضى نفس منها انتقصت به جزءا

حَيَاتُكَ اَنْفَاسٌ تُعَدُّ فَكُلَّمَا......مَضىٰ نَفَسٌ مِنهَا انْتَقَصْتَ بِهٖ جُزْءًا

"Your life comprises a few breaths that can be counted; when one of them is sent out, a part of your life has diminished."

Allah has granted man the invaluable capital of his life, so that he may invest it in profitable business venture. If he invests his capital of life sensibly in good works, there will be no limit to the profitable returns; but if he invests it unwisely in evil works, then, let alone attracting profitable returns, he will even lose his capital, and. In addition, he will incur the dreadful scourge of committing numerous sins. If however a person did not invest his life-capital in good deeds or in evil deeds, then he, at least, loses both the profit as well as the capital. This is not merely a poetic imagery, but is supported by a Prophetic Ḥadīth, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

كُلٌّ يَّغْدُوْ فَبَائِعٌ نَفْسَه، فَمُعْتِقُهَا اَوْمُوْبِقُهَا

"When a person wakes up in the morning, he invests his soul or life in a business enterprise: some of the investors free or save the capital from loss and others destroy it."

The Qur'ān itself has used the word *tijārah* in relation to 'faith' and 'righteous deed', thus:

هَلْ اَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰى تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ

> "...shall I tell you about a trade that saves you from a painful punishment? [61:10]"

Since 'Time' is man's capital of life, the man himself is the trader. Under normal circumstances, his capital is not a frozen thing that may be kept for a while and used up later when the need arises. The capital is fluid or flowing all the time, every minute and every second. The man who invests it needs to be very wise, intelligent and agile, so that he is able to swiftly and readily reap the profit from a flowing capital. One of the old scholars said that he had learnt the meaning of this verse from an ice-seller whose trade required utmost diligence, and if he were neglectful for a moment, his entire capital would melt away. That is why this verse has sworn an oath by the 'time' to indicate that it is a melting capital, and the only way to escape loss is to take every moment of his life as valuable, and use it for the four acts mentioned in the Sūrah.

Another possible reason for swearing by 'Time' may be that the 'Time' (in the sense of history) bears testimony to the fact mentioned in the Sūrah. If one thinks on the causes of the rise and decline of individuals and nations, he would certainly believe that it is only these four acts (mentioned in the forthcoming verses) that may ensure the real success and betterment of mankind. Whoever has ever abandoned them has suffered a great loss, as is evident from numerous events recorded by history.

Let us now study the 'four principles' mentioned in the Sūrah. As pointed out earlier, faith and righteous deeds are related to man's moral and spiritual growth and development. They are not in need of elaboration. However, the last two principles ['advising each other for truth'] and ['advising each other for patience'] require some elaboration.

The infinitive *tawāṣī* is derived from *waṣiyyah* which means 'to advise somebody strongly and effectively about the best thing to do in a particular situation'. The term *waṣiyyah* also refers to a 'will or testament' where a testator advises his executor regarding the disposal of his estate on his death.

The two parts are in fact two chapters of the same testament: [1] advice to truth; and [2] advice to patience and fortitude. These two concepts may be explained in different ways. One way to explain them is

that *ḥaqq* ('truth') refers to the package of 'correct faith' and 'good deeds', and *ṣabr* ('patience') refers to abstinence from all sins and evil deeds. Thus the first concept refers to 'enjoining good actions' and the second concept refers to 'forbidding evil actions'. The cumulative sense of the Sūrah is that believers have been enjoined not only to adopt right faith and good deeds themselves, but to advise others strongly and effectively to adopt them, and thus help in the creation of a healthy atmosphere around them.

It is also possible to interpret 'Truth' as referring to articles of faith, and to interpret 'patience' as referring to all good actions and abstinence from evil deeds. The word *ṣabr*, originally meaning 'to withhold oneself and to bind oneself ', encompasses binding oneself down to the performance of righteous deeds and abstaining from sins.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Taimiyyah has stated in one of his monographs that there are normally two factors that restrain a person from faith and righteous deeds: The first cause is some doubts about the true faith. When such doubts arise in the mind of people, it destroys their faith and leaves them confused and confounded. As a result, it adversely affects their righteous deeds. The second cause is the selfish desires that stop man from doing good, and involve him in evil deeds. In this situation, he theoretically believes that he should do good and abstain from sins, but his selfish desires lead him to stray from the right path. The current verse indicates to remove both causes of one's distraction. By stressing upon 'advice of truth' it has catered to the first cause, and that it should be removed by reforming others on theoretical and academic level, and by emphasizing on 'advice of patience' it has taken care of the second cause by enjoining upon the Muslims to advise others to give up the base desires and remain firm against their evil demands. Put differently, 'enjoining the truth' means 'improving the knowledge of Muslims or their intellectual development' and 'enjoining patience' means 'improving the practical life of Muslims'.

Need to Salvage the Entire Muslim Society

This Sūrah lays down the important principle of guidance for the Muslims that inviting other Muslims to keep to the true faith and good deeds is as much necessary as their own submission to the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah. Without sincere efforts, to the best of one's ability, to invite

others to the right path, one's own good deeds are not enough to one's salvation. Especially, if a person does not take care of the spiritual and moral welfare of his wife, children and family and turns a blind eye to their unrighteous deeds, he is blocking his way to salvation - no matter how pious he himself might be. Therefore, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah make it obligatory upon every Muslim to do his best to invite others to the good deeds, and warn them against the evil acts. Unfortunately, let alone the general public, many learned people are lax in this matter. They think it is sufficient for them to be concerned about their own moral and spiritual well-being. They are not concerned about the well-being of their family and children. May Allah grant us the ability to act upon this verse.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-'Aṣr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Humazah
(The Backbiter)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 9 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةِ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِىْ جَمَعَ مَالًا وَّعَدَّدَهٗ ﴿٢﴾ يَحْسَبُ
اَنَّ مَالَهٗٓ اَخْلَدَهٗ ﴿٣﴾ كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِى الْحُطَمَةِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا
الْحُطَمَةُ ﴿٥﴾ نَارُ اللّٰهِ الْمُوْقَدَةُ ﴿٦﴾ الَّتِىْ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْاَفْـِٕدَةِ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّهَا
عَلَيْهِمْ مُّؤْصَدَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ فِىْ عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ ﴿٩﴾

Woe to every backbiter, derider [1] **who accumulates wealth and counts it.** [2] **He thinks that his wealth has made him eternal.** [3] **Never! He will certainly be thrown into the Crusher.** [4] **And what may let you know what the Crusher is?** [5] **It is Allah's kindled fire,** [6] **that will peep into the hearts.** [7] **It will be closed on them,** [8] **in outstretched columns.** [9]

Warning against dreadful end of those committing three obnoxious sins

This Sūrah warns of the severe punishment on three grave sins, and then highlights the nature of that severe punishment. The three sins are backbiting, deriding and selfish hoarding of wealth. The words *hamz* and *lamz* are used in several senses. Most commentators agree that the word *hamz*, from which is derived the word *humazah,* means to 'backbite', that is, to speak ill of a person behind his back. The word *lamz,* from which is

derived the word *lumazah,* means to 'slander' or 'to deride', that is, to speak ill of a person to his face. Both these sins are morally and socially obnoxious and deadly. The Qur'ān and the Sunnah have sounded a stern warning against these sins. However, 'backbiting' is, from one perspective, worse than 'slander'. 'Backbiting' is worse because the ill of a person is spoken behind his back; the victim is not present to defend himself and put an end to it; thus the sin continues to be committed to a greater and increasing degree. 'Slander', on the other hand, though an obnoxious sin in itself, is relatively less in degree than backbiting, because the victim is present to defend himself and put an end to face-to-face insulting or fault-finding with him. From another perspective 'slander' is worse than 'backbiting', because to speak ill of a person to his face is tantamount to insulting him and denigrating him. This is morally and socially more harmful and hurting, and therefore its punishment is more dreadful. According to a *Ḥadīth,* the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

شِرَارُ عِبَادِ اللّٰهِ تَعَالٰى اَلْمَشَّاءُوْنَ بِالنَّمِيْمَةِ اَلْمُفَرِّقُوْنَ بَيْنَ الْاَحِبَّةِ الْبَاغُوْنَ اَلْبُرَآءَ العنت

"The worst servants of Allah are those who speak ill of someone, creating enmity between friends and finding fault with innocent people."

The third evil quality denounced severely in this Sūrah is greed, that is, the selfish hoarding of wealth, against which is the stern warning of the dreadful end of those who have passion for worldly riches. This verse, however, refers to the love of, and passion for, wealth which is accumulated and counted over and over again. Other verses and *Aḥādīth* bear testimony to the fact that amassing of wealth in principle is not prohibited or sinful. Therefore, verse [2] must be interpreted in the light of those verses and traditions. This verse purports to say that anyone who accumulates wealth and does not pay his obligatory dues or has greed for wealth that leads him to pride and arrogance, or has love of wealth that engrosses him in the hoarding of wealth so profoundly that he forgets his religious obligations, his practice is condemned in the strongest terms, and a person attaching such profound love, greed and passion for material riches will suffer eternal perdition as described in the verses that follow.

Verse [104:7] تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْاَفْئِدَةِ (that will peep into the hearts). In other words, the fire of Hell will reach their hearts. The basic property of fire is to burn every particle of the things that fall into it. When people are put

into the Hell-fire, it will devour every limb and organ of the body until it reaches their heart, but the person will not die. This characteristic of the Hell-fire is especially highlighted in the verse because the fire of this world kills the person even before reaching the heart. The fire of the Hell, on the other hand, will reach the heart in the state of life, and man will experience the torture of the burning of the heart while alive.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Humazah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Fīl

(The Elephant)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 5 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ﴿١﴾ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي
تَضْلِيلٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ تَرْمِيهِم بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن
سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ ﴿٥﴾

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant? [1] **Has He not turned their plan into nullity?** [2] **And He sent upon them flying birds in flocks,** [3] **throwing upon them stones of baked clay,** [4] **and thus He turned them into an eaten-up chaff.** [5]

Commentary

The subject-matter of the Sūrah

This Sūrah refers to the story of the People of the Elephants who came with an army of elephants for the purpose of destroying the House of Allah in (The Holy Ka'bah) in Makkah. But their plan backfired and the Divine scourge overtook them. Allah destroyed the army with a flock of ordinary birds. Thus their plans were foiled and thwarted.

When did the event take place?

This event took place in the very year in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ was born at Makkah, according to some traditions and the popular view among the historians. [Ibn Kathīr]. The scholars of *ḥadīth* have taken this

event as a special type of *mu'jizah* (miracle) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but the term *mu'jizah*, in its real sense, refers to an abnormal event shown by Allah to prove the claim of a prophet to having been sent by Him. Therefore, a *mu'jizah* is shown after a prophet's Divine commission. However, sometimes it happens that a miraculous event takes place before a prophet's claim to prophet-hood. This, in the parlance of the scholars of *ḥadīth*, is called *irhāṣ* which means 'prologue or introduction'. The word *rahṣ* means a 'foundation stone' [Qāmūs]. As the miraculous events taking place before the advent of prophets or before their claim to prophet-hood are meant to introduce and affirm that soon a particular prophet will be Divinely commissioned, they are referred to as *irhāṣ*. Many miraculous incidents of this nature [*irhāṣāt*] occurred before the birth and the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and one of them was the incident of the 'People of the Elephants' who were miraculously prevented by the Heavenly scourge from destroying the House of Allah.

Story of the People of the Elephants

Ibn Kathīr, the leading authority on Prophetic Tradition and history, recounts the story as follows: Yemen was under the control of the rulers of Ḥimyar. They were idolaters. Their last king was Dhū Nuwās, an idolater himself, was the enemy of the righteous Christians of his time, who believed in and worshipped One Allah. He persecuted the believers, who were opposed to idol-worship, by burning them alive. Most scholars agree that he killed, in cold blood, by throwing about 20 000 sincere and righteous Christians in his city into a large fire pit, burning them alive in an effort to get them to give up their sincere religion. This is the story of the 'People of Fire-Pit' referred to in [85:4-7]. Two men somehow managed to escape from him. They fled to Syria and took refuge with Caesar, who was himself a Christian and the emperor of Syria. They requested the emperor to avenge this cruel act of Dhū Nuwās. Caesar wrote to Najāshi (Negus), the king of Abyssinia [now Ethiopia], who was closer to the home of the man. Najāshi sent two governors with him: Arbāṭ and Abrahah, along with a huge army.

The army invaded Yemen and freed the whole country from the possession of Ḥimyar. Dhū Nuwāṣ tried to escape, but was drowned in the sea and died. Yemen thus became part of the Abyssinian dominion and Abrahah was appointed its viceroy. However, he and Arbāṭ fought

each other until Arbāṭ was eventually killed and Abrahah emerged victorious. The latter was appointed the commander of the Abyssinian army in Yemen, and the governor of that region. Having captured Yemen, he built a superbly luxurious cathedral in his area. The purpose was to attract the people of Yemen to make pilgrimage to this cathedral instead of *Ka'bah* in Makkah. It was huge and tall so that a person standing at the bottom was not able to see the top. He decorated the structure with gold, silver and other precious gems. In short, he meant it to be an architectural masterpiece, second to none or unsurpassed in the world, to be revered by all and sundry and divert pilgrims from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to his cathedral in Yemen. He did this after he had witnessed the love and enthusiasm of the Yemeni Arabs - which were the same as those felt all over the Arabia - for the *Ka'bah*, with the aim of making them forsake their attachment to the Mosque of Makkah and turn instead to his new luxurious cathedral. Thus he proclaimed throughout his kingdom that no one should ever visit the *Ka'bah* in Makkah, and that the pilgrimage should from now on take place to his so-called '*Ka'bah*' in Yemen.

Although the Arabs were idol-worshippers, the love and reverence for the religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and the *Ka'bah* had permeated their hearts. As a result, the ~~'Andān,~~ Qaḥṭān and Quraish tribes were enraged and infuriated by this proclamation. One night, someone entered the church and defecated in it. According to other narratives, a nomadic tribe halted near the church and started a fire for their own needs. The wind on that day was blowing violently and the cathedral caught on fire and sustained much loss. When Abrahah came to know about it, and learnt that a Quraishi had done this, he swore to march to the House of Makkah and destroy it stone by stone. Thus he prepared himself and set out with a huge and powerful army, so that none might prevent him from carrying out his mission. He asked for Najāshi's permission. He permitted him and sent for him, particularly for this expedition, a special elephant whose name was Maḥmūd. It was unusually huge in size and powerful in strength the like of which had never been seen before. The king of Abyssinia sent in eight more elephants as reinforcements for the army. Their intention was to use this extraordinary elephant to demolish the *Ka'bah*. They planned to do this by fastening chains to the pillars of the

Ka'bah and placing the other ends around the neck of the elephant. Then they would make the elephant pull on them in order to tear down the walls of the *Ka'bah* [God forbid!] all at once. When the Arabs heard of Abrahah's expedition, they considered it their moral obligation to defend the Sacred House and thwart the evil plans of the conspirators. Thus, the Arabs raised a large army under the command of Dhū Nafr, a Yamenite Arab. He called the Arabs to go to war against Abrahah and fight in defense of the Sacred House, so that the enemy is unable to tear it down. The people responded to him readily and entered into battle with the enemy, but he defeated them. This was due to Allah's will that no humans should protect His House and His intent to expose the enemy to embarrassment and venerate the Sacred Sanctuary to the highest degree. Dhū Nafr was captured and taken prisoner.

The army continued on its way until it came to the settlement of the Banū Khath'am tribe. Their leader, Nufail Ibn Ḥabīb, led his entire tribe against the army, but they too were defeated and Nufail was taken prisoner. Abrahah at first decided to kill him, but at second thought he forgave him and took him as his guide to show him the way to Ḥijāz.

When the army approached Ṭa'if, the people of Thaqīf went out to Abrahah. They wanted to pacify him, because they had heard about the fate of those who had resisted him previously. Also, they were afraid that he would demolish their temple consecrated in the name of their idol Al-Lāt. Therefore, they did not resist him on the understanding that he would not touch the idol of Lāt. He was compassionate to them, and they sent a guide with him by the name of Abū Righāl. When they arrived in a place called Al-Maghmas, near Makkah, they settled there. This was the pasture where the camels of the Quraish grazed. Abrahah sent his troops on a foray to capture the camels and other grazing animals of the Makkans. They accomplished their mission. They also drove away about two hundred camels of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, grandfather of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the leader of the Quraish. Abrahah then sent an emissary named Ḥanāṭah Al-Ḥimyarī to enter Makkah and bring to him the leader of the Quraish. He mandated him to convey to the leader of the Quraish his message that the king did not come to fight with the Makkans unless they stood in his way of destroying their Sacred Sanctuary. Arriving in the city, Ḥanāṭah was directed to 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib

Ibn Hāshim, to whom he communicated Abrahah's message. According to Ibn Isḥāq's narration, 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib replied: "By Allah! We too have no desire to fight him, nor do we have the might to do so. This is the Sacred Sanctuary of Allah built by His friend Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. If He wills to prevent Abrahah from pulling it down, He will protect it. And if He allows him to approach it, by Allah, we have no means to defend it." So Ḥanāṭah told him: "Come with me to Abrahah." So 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib went with him.

When Abrahah saw him, he was highly impressed, because 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib had the most handsome, charming and attractive personality. He descended from his throne and sat with the latter on a carpet on the ground. He then said to his interpreter to ask him: "What do you need?" 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib replied to the interpreter: "I want the king to give back my two hundred camels which his soldiers have taken from me." Then Abrahah told his interpreter to relay to him: "When I first set my eyes on you, I admired you greatly and had great respect for you. But all that is now lost. You speak only of your two hundred camels while you fully well know that I have come to tear down your *Ka'bah* which is the embodiment of your religion and the religion of your forefathers. You did not even say a single word to persuade me to spare it." 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib calmly responded: "I am the owner of my camels and am concerned about them. I am not the owner of Allah's House. The Master of the House knows how best to protect His House." Abrahah rudely rebuffed: "Your God cannot protect it from me." 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib made a rejoinder: "Then do as you like or [take your chance!]" According to other narratives, there were other chiefs of Quraish with 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib at the time of this negotiation. They proposed to Abrahah that if he withdrew from the Sanctuary, the entire region of Tihamah would pay him a third of their agricultural produce annually as tribute. But he turned down the offer. He then gave back 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib's camels to him. 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib took his camels and went back home, ordering his people to leave Makkah and seek shelter at the top of the mountains. He feared that atrocities might be committed by the army against them. Then he went with a few figures of the Quraish to the Sacred Sanctuary. He held the metal ring of the door of *Ka'bah* and prayed Allah to give them victory over Abrahah and his army. While hanging on to the ring of the *Ka'bah*'s door, he earnestly

implored: "We have no strength to face the army of Abrahah. So, O my Lord! Defend Your *Ka'bah*." Having so prayed in all earnestness, 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib led all the Makkans to the neighbouring mountains, because they were convinced that Allah's scourge would overtake Abrahah and his troops. This is the reason why they spoke to Abrahah about their camels, and not about the House of Allah.

When the next morning dawned, Abrahah prepared to enter the sacred city of Makkah. He prepared the elephant named Maḥmūd and mobilized his army, and they turned the elephant towards the *Ka'bah*. At that moment Nufail Ibn Ḥabīb, whom Abrahah had captured earlier, approached it and stood next to it, and taking it by its ear, he said: "Return safely where you came from, because you are, verily, in the Sacred City of Allah." Then he released the elephant's ear and it knelt and sat down forthwith. The elephant drivers exerted all efforts to persuade the elephant to enter the City, but their efforts were in vain. Then they tried striking it with large iron spears and putting iron arrowheads in its trunk. They beat it on its head with axes and used hooked staffs to pull it out of its resistance and make it stand, but it refused. So they turned it towards Yemen, and it rose and walked quickly. Then they turned it towards Syria, it walked fast. Then they turned it towards the east and it walked briskly. Then they turned it towards Makkah, it knelt and sat down again .

This was one aspect of the manifestation of the Divine power unfolding itself miraculously. On the other hand, some flocks of birds were seen coming from the sea. Each bird carried three pebbles of the size of gram seeds or lentils, one in each claw and two in its beak. According to Wāqidi's narration, the birds looked unusual which were never seen before. They looked smaller than pigeons, and their claws were red in colour. They flew over Abrahah's army and pelted them with the pebbles. Each pebble was more devastating than the bullet of a revolver . When it fell on anything, it tore directly through the body and settled deep in the ground. Seeing this scourge, the elephants fled in panic, except one which was harmed and destroyed by the pebble. Not all of Abrahah's men were destroyed instantly. People escaped in different directions. They died excruciatingly on their way back. As Allah had willed that the most distressful scourge should be inflicted upon Abrahah, He did not allow

him to die immediately. In fact, Allah afflicted him with a deadly disease. A kind of poison spread thoroughly through his entire body and caused every single part to decay - his limbs began to rot and separate from the rest of his body and he started losing one finger after another. His body was carried back in that state to Yemen. By the time they arrived back in Ṣan'ā', the capital of Yemen, his body was broken down limb by limb until he eventually died. Two of Maḥmūd's (name of elephant) drivers remained in Makkah, but both of them became blind and paralyzed. Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq reports that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﵂ narrates that she saw them blind and paralyzed. Her sister, Sayyidah Asmā' ﵂, says that she saw the two blind and paralyzed men begging. The 'People of the Elephants' is a momentous event in Arab history, which was witnessed by hundreds of Arabs. It is to this well-known historical incident that this Sūrah refers.

Lexical Analysis

Verse [105:1] اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِاَصْحٰبِ الْفِيْلِ (Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the people of the Elephant?) In the phrase *alam tara* [have you not seen], the second person pronoun refers to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is interesting to note that the event took place before the blessed birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ He could not have seen or witnessed it with his own eyes. However, the incident was so widely known as if the Prophet ﷺ had seen it with his own eyes, which is a sign of the certainty of its happening. Such a knowledge is described by the word *ru'yat* [seeing]. As reported earlier, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﵂ and her sister, Sayyidah Asmā' ﵂, both say that they had seen the two camel drivers had become blind and paralyzed and used to go around begging . In this way, the traces of this event were seen even after the birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Verse [105:3] طَيْرًا اَبَابِيْلَ (... birds in flocks.) The word *abābīl* is plural and is said to have no singular. It means birds in flocks, or swarms of birds. It is not the name of a particular bird. In Urdu usually *abābīl* refers to 'swallows', they are not implied in the verse as indicated in the above narration. These birds were somewhat smaller in size than pigeon and they were birds that were never seen before. [Sa'īd Ibn Jubair, as quoted by Qurṭubī].

Verse [105:4] بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّنْ سِجِّيْلٍ (...stones of baked clay.) The word *sijjīl* is a

compound Persian word, Arabiciszed, made up of two Persian words: *sang* [stone] and *gil* [clay]. They refer to ordinary or common clay rolled into little balls and then baked to harden. These pebbles are not heavy or hard like rocks chipped off mountains. They in themselves did not have any devastating power, but it was Allah who created in these stones the high capability of explosion and blowing-up even more than the bullets of a revolver.

Verse [105:5] فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ (And thus He turned them into an eaten-up chaff .) The word *'aṣf* means 'chaff, straw, husk or bran'. Usually the *'aṣf* is scattered and when it is eaten or devoured by animals, it does not remain in the same state. This is what happened to Abrahah and his army .

Conclusion

The miraculous event of the 'People of the Elephant' enhanced in the hearts of the entire Arabian society the love, respect and honor of the Quraish. When Arabia witnessed that Allah has, on their behalf, miraculously destroyed their enemy, they were convinced that the Quraish are men of God, and custodians of the Sacred House of Allah [Qurṭubī]. That is why they were respected and protected wherever they went; although other caravans in Arabia had to fear attacks from highway robbers, the Quraish travelled untouched and enjoyed high social status. As a result, they could freely and safely carry out their commercial activities in the neighboring states, and enjoy economic prosperity. The Sūrah that follows refers to these journeys and invites the Quraish to be thankful to Allah and worship Him alone for providing them with all of their needs.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Fīl
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Quraish

(The Quraish)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 4 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 4

لِإِيلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ ﴿١﴾ إِيلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ ﴿٢﴾ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ
هَٰذَا الْبَيْتِ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُم مِّن جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُم مِّنْ خَوْفٍ ﴿٤﴾

Because of the familiarity of the Quraish, [1] **that is, their familiarity with the trips of winter and summer,** [2] **they must worship the Lord of this House,** [3] **who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear.** [4]

Commentary

The Subject-matter of Sūrah Al-Fīl and Sūrah Al-Quraish

All commentators concur that the subject-matter of the two Sūrahs is so closely related that in some of the copies of the Qur'ān they had been written as a single Sūrah without the insertion of *bismillah* between them. But when Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ compiled a standard copy of the Holy Qur'ān with the consensus of all the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he separated these two Sūrahs and inserted *bismillah* between them, and the two Sūrahs.

Lexical Analysis

لِإِيلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ (Because of the familiarity of the Quraish 106:1). The particle *li* is a preposition. According to the rules of Arabic grammar, it should be linked with another sentence. What is that sentence here? In answer to this question, different possibilities are highlighted by the exegetes.

syntax: grammatical arrangement of words.
إعراب

Keeping in view the close relation of the present Sūrah with the previous one, some of them have held that the following sentence should be taken as understood here: انّا اهلكنا اصحٰب الفيل "We [Allah] destroyed the 'people of the elephant' so that the Quraish, who were familiar with two commercial trips during winter and summer, may not have any obstacle in their trips, and by this trading activity they might develop a certain prestige for them and respect them." A second school of interpreters has taken the following sentence as understood: اعجبوا (One should wonder on the Quraish undertaking winter and summer journeys freely and safely.) A third school of interpreters says that this is the *lam* of *ta'lil* and it is syntactically related to the sentence that follows it فَلْيَعْبُدُوْا رَبَّ هٰذَا الْبَيْتِ (they must worship the Lord of this House.) The Sūrah draws attention to the fact that the Quraish used to make two trade-journeys - one in winter to Yemen and another in summer to Syria. These trade-journeys made them wealthy and affluent. This was possible because Allah annihilated their enemies, the people of the elephant, in an exemplary way and created in the hearts of the people an awe and reverence for them. People held them in high esteem, respect and honor in all the territories where they went.

Superiority of Quraish

This Sūrah indicates that Quraish, of all the tribes of Arabia, was most acceptable in the sight of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Verily, Allah selected Kinānah from the offspring of Prophet Ismā'īl عليه السلام and selected Quraish from the progeny of Kinānah. From the Quraish, Allah selected Banū Hāshim and from Banū Hāshim He selected me." [Baghawī on the authority of Wāthilah Ibn Asqa']. Another Tradition reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "People will follow Quraish in matters of good as well as in matters of evil." [Muslim on the authority of Jābir, as quoted by Maẓharī]. The reason for the selection of the tribes mentioned in the first Tradition is presumably on account of their special abilities, innate capacities and natural endowments. Even in the days of paganism and ignorance, when people practiced *kufr* and *shirk*, their morals and inborn abilities were of a very high standard. They had the perfect capacity to accept the truth. This is the reason why most of the blessed Companions and Friends of Allah were Quraishites. [Mazhari]

Verse [106:2] رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ (...their familiarity with the trips of winter and summer.) It is a known fact that Makkah is situated in an utterly bleak and arid valley where no agricultural produce grows, nor are there any orchards where the people of Makkah could reap any kind

of fruits. Therefore, the founder of the House of Allah, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm Khalīl-ullah ﷵ, prayed to Allah at the time of founding the city, thus: [2:126] رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هٰذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَّارْزُقْ اَهْلَهٗ مِنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ (My Lord, make this a city of peace, and provide its people with fruits) and this fact is mentioned in [28:57], thus: يُجْبٰى اِلَيْهِ ثَمَرٰتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ (to which the fruits of everything are drawn)". The Quraish thus needed to make these commercial trips out of Makkah into the neighboring territories to bring the necessities of life to their city. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵄ reports that the people of Makkah were in a state of abject poverty and Hāshim, the great grandfather of the Prophet ﷺ, exhorted the Quraish to undertake the trading caravans to the neighboring territories. As Syria was a cold region, they went there in summer; and Yemen had a warm climate, so they went there in winter to carry out their commercial activities. They, after their commercial ventures that brought to them great profits and gains, would return to their city safely due to the respect that the people had for them, because they were the keepers and custodians of Allah's sanctuary. Therefore, whoever knew them would honor them. Even those who came to them and traveled with them, would be safe because of them. Hashim was the leader of the Quraish and maintained the economic principle to distribute among the rich and the poor members of the Quraish the gains and the profits made in their business. As a result, even the poor people lived like the wealthy people. Furthermore, an additional Divine favor was granted to them: Allah spared them the trouble of making these annual trips, in that the areas adjacent to Makkah such as Yemen, Tabālah and Ḥarsh were made fertile, fecund and productive where corns, food grains and other agricultural produce grew abundantly - even more than their need. As a result, they had to carry these agricultural produce to Jeddah where they sold them. Thus most of the necessities were available in Jeddah. The people of Makkah, instead of undertaking the two long journeys, went to Jeddah, merely two stations away, to bring their necessities of life. In the current verse, Allah mentions His favor upon them.

Verse [106:3] فَلْيَعْبُدُوْا رَبَّ هٰذَا الْبَيْتِ (they must worship the Lord of this House.) Having mentioned the Divine favors, the Quraish are especially enjoined to express their gratitude to 'the Lord of this House'. Here, out of many attributes of Allah, 'the Lord of this House' is singled out, because it was this House that became the source and fountain of all blessings for them.

Verse [106:4] الَّذِيْٓ اَطْعَمَهُمْ مِّنْ جُوْعٍ وَّاٰمَنَهُمْ مِّنْ خَوْفٍ (Who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear.) The verse comprehensively captures all that was needed for the Quraish to live

happily and peacefully in the world. The first phrase أَطْعَمَهُم مِّن جُوعٍ (Who gave them food against hunger) implies that they were provided all year round with every kind of fruit and food. The security referred to in the second phrase اٰمَنَهُم مِّنْ خَوْفٍ (and gave them security against fear) includes security from enemies and robbers (who, out of their respect to them as guardians of Ka'bah, spared them from their attacks), and it also includes security from the punishment in the Hereafter (for those who fulfilled the necessary conditions of faith).

Special Note

Ibn Kathīr says that whoever worships Allah according to the command given in this verse, Allah will give him safety, not only in this world, but also security from punishment in the Hereafter. And whoever deviates from this command, He will deprive him of both types of safety and security as exemplified in the following verse [16:112] :

ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ اٰمِنَةً مُّطْمَئِنَّةً يَّأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِّنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللّٰهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللّٰهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

(And Allah has given an example that there was a town, secure and satisfied, with its sustenance coming in plenty from every place. Then, it turned ungrateful to the bounties of Allah; so, Allah made it taste hunger and terror [cast over it] like a garment in return of what its people used to do. [16:112]

A Great Benefit

Abul Ḥasan Qazwīnī has stated that anyone who fears his enemy or an affliction, should recite Sūrah Al-Quraish. It will give him security from fear and calamity. This is cited by Imām Jazrī and he says that this Sūrah has been tried and tested successfully for this purpose. Qāḍī Thanā'ullah Pānī Pattī رحمه الله تعالى cites this in his Tafsīr Maẓharī and says that his Shaikh Mirzā Maẓhar Jān-i-Jānān instructed him to recite this Sūrah at the time of fear and danger, and said its recitation has been tested and tried to avert all kinds of calamities and afflictions. Qāḍī Thanā'ullah says that he has experienced it several times.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Quraish
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mā'ūn

(The Small Gifts)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 7 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 7

أَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِى يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ ﴿١﴾ فَذٰلِكَ الَّذِى يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا
يَحُضُّ عَلٰى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿٣﴾ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ
عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآءُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيَمْنَعُونَ
الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾

Have you seen him who denies the Requital? [1] **So he is the same one who pushes away the orphan.** [2] **and does not persuade (others) to feed the needy.** [3] **So, woe to those performers of *ṣalāh*,** [4] **who are neglectful of their *ṣalāh*,** [5] **who (do good only to) show off,** [6] **and refuse (to give even) small gifts.** [7]

The love of the world causes nations to lose faith and consign Allah to oblivion

This Sūrah denounces some of the evil actions of the pagans and the hypocrites, and it holds out a threat of destruction to those who commit them. If these evil actions are committed by believers, who do not reject the true faith, they are still heinous and gravely sinful, but the threat of chastisement made in this sūrah does not apply to them. Therefore, verse [107:1] أَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِى يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ (Have you not seen him who denies the Requital?), as a preamble, makes plain that the person who performs

these evil deeds is one who cries lies to the Doom, and thus the warning of punishment mentioned in this Sūrah is for those who deny the religion and the Day of Judgement. The verse contains a subtle indication that the moral sins condemned in this Sūrah are far too inconceivable from a believer; only a non-believer or hypocrite would commit them. The morally bad and sinful deeds mentioned here are: [1] oppressing and insulting the orphan, and being unkind to them; [2] despite the means, failing to feed the poor or failing to urge others to feed them; [3] praying [in public only, not in private] only to show the people; and [4] failing to pay the Zakāh [obligatory alms]. These actions are intrinsically bad and gravely sinful, but their commission in the wake of *kufr* [disbelief] and *takdhīb* [rejection] are even more aggravating, because they attract eternal perdition, which in this Sūrah is described as *wail* [heavy affliction or calamity or disaster or destruction].

Verses [107:4-6] فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّيْنَ. الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُوْنَ. الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ يُرَآءُوْنَ. (So woe to those performers of *ṣalāh* who are neglectful of their *ṣalāh*,who [do good only to] show off.) These verses describe the characteristics of the hypocrites who used to perform the prayers only to make a display of them to the people and prove that their claim of being sincere Muslims is true. As they do not believe in the obligatory nature of the prayers, they are not regular at them, and they do not observe the prescribed times, but offer them carelessly at the eleventh hour or completely out of time. They perform them only when they must to make a display of them, otherwise they have no place in their lives. The preposition 'an (translated above as 'of') in the prepositional phrase عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ "[neglectful] of their *ṣalāh*" is significant. It indicates that they [the hypocrites] are neglectful of the very concept of *ṣalāh*. This does not refer to the unintentional errors, slips and mistakes that Muslims make in their prayers. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also made this type of unintentional mistakes in his prayers. The warning of Hell by the expression of wail does not apply to such mistakes. If that was the case, the prepositional phrase would have been *fi salatihim* [in their prayers] instead of [*'an Ṣalatihim* [neglectful of their prayers].

Verse [107:7] وَيَمْنَعُوْنَ الْمَاعُوْنَ (And refuse [to give even] small gifts.) The word *mā'ūn* literally means 'any small or petty thing' and idiomatically it refers to 'small household articles of common use such as axe, hoe, cooking pot which at the time of need neighbors borrow from one another'.

Anyone who is unwilling to lend such small items is morally a very miserly and mean person. However, in the current verse the word *mā'ūn* is taken in the sense of *Zakāh* [obligatory alms] because it is a little amount out of much wealth - only 2½% out of the entire wealth. Majority of the commentators - like Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk ﷺ and others - hold the view that *mā'ūn* implies *Zakāh*. [Maẓharī]. The threat of *wail* (torment of Hell) can only be for failure to fulfil one's legal obligation. Giving small items to help out one's fellow human beings is a humanitarian and philanthropic gesture that carries much reward in the Hereafter, but it is not an obligation at all, the violation of which could lead to eternal perdition. Traditions reporting that *mā'ūn* refers to pots and pans, and other household items of daily use are to show that if a person is reluctant to part with such small items, how will he have the heart to part with 2½% of his wealth? The Traditions purport to say that these people are so narrow-minded that they are not willing to make the least bit of selfless sacrifice for the welfare and well-being of others. They are morally mean, low and miserly in the extreme. Therefore, they do not pay their legal alms. Thus the threat of punishment in Hell-fire is not on account of failure to do one's neighborly acts of kindness, but for failure to pay the legal alms and perhaps for their extreme niggardliness.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mā'ūn
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Kauthar

(The Kauthar)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 3 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

إِنَّآ أَعْطَيْنٰكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ﴿١﴾ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ
هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ ﴿٣﴾

(O Prophet,) surely We have given to you Al-Kauthar (a river in Paradize). [1] **So, offer *ṣalāh* (prayer) to your Lord, and sacrifice.** [2] **Surely it is your enemy whose traces are cut off.** [3]

Cause of Revelation

It is reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, on the authority of Suddī, and by Baihaqī, in *Dalā'il-un- Nubuwwah,* on the authority of Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥusain, that the Arabs used to taunt and revile people who have lost their male issues. They used to refer to such a person as '*abtar*', meaning 'having no male offspring or no male issue'. In keeping with this social evil, when the young son of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, namely Qāsim passed away, some leaders of Quraish, especially 'Āṣ Ibn Wā'il, started taunting the Holy Prophet ﷺ telling the people that they no longer need to bother about him, because he had no sons to carry on his name and that he would be forgotten after his death; he is '*abtar*', that is, his lineage is cut off. On this occasion, the Sūrah was revealed. [Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, Maẓharī].

According to some narratives, Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, a Jew of Madīnah,

came to Makkah and the Quraish asked him: "You are the leader of the people. What do you think about this young man who claims that he is better than us (in religion), while we are the people who serve the pilgrims; we are the custodians of Ka'bah and supply water to the pilgrims." He replied: "You are better than him." This Sūrah was revealed on that occasion. [Ibn Kathīr cites this incident from Bazzār with an authentic *chain of narrators*; and Maẓharī says that Muslim also transmitted the incident].

According to these narrations, this Sūrah was sent down when the unbelievers of Makkah taunted the Holy Prophet ﷺ because he had lost all his male issues, and called him '*abtar*' or insulted him for some other reason. The present Sūrah gives an answer to the taunts of the unbelievers, and maintains that there is no justification for calling the Holy Prophet ﷺ an '*abtar*' only because he had no male child alive, not only because his lineal offspring will remain till the Day of Judgment, though from his daughters, but he was destined to be the spiritual father of a multitude of sons in all ages to the end of time, sons who were to be far more faithful, obedient and loving than the sons of any father, and they will outnumber the followers of all the Prophets that came before him. The Sūrah has also dismissed the statement of Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, and highlights the great honor and respect given to him by Allah.

The River or Fountain of Kauthar

Verse [108:1] إِنَّآ أَعْطَيْنٰكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ([O Prophet,] surely, We have given you Al-Kauthar [a river in Paradise].) The word 'Al-Kauthar' literally means 'abundant goodness'. Imām Bukhārī has recorded on the authority of Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ that Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said about 'al-Kauthar': 'It is the abundant goodness that Allah gave to him [Holy Prophet ﷺ]'. A special pupil of Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said: "I asked Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ that people claim that it is a river in Paradise." Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ replied that the river in Paradise is part of the goodness that Allah gave him. Therefore, Mujāhid interprets that it is the abundant goodness of this world, as well as of the next world. This explanation includes the river in Paradise and other things as well.

The following Ḥadīth is recorded in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Nasā'ī from Sayyidnā Anas ؓ that he said:

بينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بين اظهرنا فى المسجد اذ اغفى اغفاءة، ثم

رفع رأسه متبسّمًا. قلنا: ما اَضحكك يا رسول اللّٰه؟ قال: لقد انزلت علىّ انفًا سورة فقرأ بسم اللّٰه الرّحمٰن الرحيم انّا اعطينٰك الكوثر الخ ثم قال: اتدرون ما الكوثر؟ قلنا: اللّٰه ورسوله اعلم، قال: فانّه نهرٌ وعدنيه ربّى عزوجل عليه خيرکثير، وهو حوض ترد عليه امتى يوم القيامة، انيته عدد نجوم فى السّماء، فيحتلج العبد منهم، فاقول ربّ انّه من امّتى فيقول: انّك لا تدرى ما احدث بعدك.

"While we were with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the mosque, he went into some kind of slumber or doziness. Then he lifted his head smiling. We asked : 'O Messenger of Allah! What has caused you to smile?' He replied: 'A Sūrah has just been revealed to me.' Then he recited Bismillah and Sūrah Al-Kauthar. Then he asked: 'Do you know what is Al-Kauthar?' We replied: 'Allah and His Messenger know best,' He said: 'It is a river that my Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, has promised me and it has abundant goodness. It is a fountain where my Ummah will come on the Day of Judgement. Its containers are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Then a servant of Allah from among them will be prevented from it, and I will say: 'O Lord! Verily, he is from my Ummah [followers.] ' Then Allah will say: 'You do not know what he introduced [or innovated] after you.'"

This is the wording of Muslim. Ibn Kathīr, having cited this Tradition, writes further:

وقد ورد فى صفة الحوض يوم القيٰمه انّه يشخب فيه ميزابان من السّماء من نهر الکوثر و ان انيته عدد نجوم السّماء.

"It is reported regarding the description of the fountain on the Day of Judgement that two channels will lead from the sky to supply the fountain with the water of Kauthar. It will have more cups than the stars in the sky."

The Tradition cited above clarifies many points.

[1] It indicates the cause of the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar.

[2] It gives its authentic interpretation, that is, 'abundant goodness' and that it includes the fountain of Kauthar which will quench the thirst of the Prophet's ﷺ followers on the Day of Judgement.

[3] The actual river of Kauthar is in Paradise, and the fountain of Kauthar will be on the Plain of Gathering. Two channels will flow from the river of Paradise into the fountain of Gathering, augmenting

its supply of water.

[4] It reconciles the narratives that tell us that the believers will arrive at the fountain of Kauthar before their entry into Paradise.

[5] Some people will be turned away from the fountain, because they later on turned away from Islam, or they were not Muslims at all, but expressed their Islam only hypocritically. Their hypocrisy was exposed after the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Allah knows best!

There are Traditions that describe the cleanness and sweetness of water of Kauthar, and that its banks are adorned with pearls.These qualities cannot be compared with anything in this world.

If the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar is in response to the taunting of the heathens who called him '*abtar*' because he had lost his sons, as explained earlier, this Sūrah comforts him. They used to say that when he would pass away, there shall be none to take his name on account of having no male offspring and his activities will cease. This Sūrah tells him that he has been granted Al-Kauthar and completely dismisses the reproach of his enemies, in that his lineage does not stop here in this world, but his spiritual lineage will continue till the Day of Gathering. His spiritual sons and daughters will outnumber the Ummahs of the previous Prophets. They will also enjoy the greatest respect and honor.

Prayer and Sacrifice

Verse [108:2] فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ (So, offer *ṣalāh* [prayer] to your Lord, and sacrifice.) The imperative *inḥar* is derived from *naḥr* which means 'to sacrifice by stabbing upwards into the jugular vein [the way of slaughter for camels as opposed to other cattle]'. As the Arabs generally used to sacrifice camels, the verse employs the imperative *wanḥar.* Occasionally, the word *naḥr* is used in the general sense of 'sacrifice'.

Verse [108:1] vehemently denounces the false notion of the unbelievers and gives glad tidings of Kauthar to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in this world as well as in the next world. He will have the abundant goodness in both the worlds immeasurably. The current verse directs the Holy Prophet ﷺ the way to express his gratitude to Allah on this good tiding: [1] prayer; and [2] sacrifice. Ṣalāh is the highest form of physical worship; and sacrifice is highest form of pecuniary or monetary form of worship.

Sacrifice in the name of Allah is a fight against idolatry, because the idolaters used to sacrifice in the name of their idols. On that basis, Islamic sacrifice is distinctive and important. On another occasion, the Qur'ān jointly mentions prayer and sacrifice, thus: [6:162]

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

My prayer, my offering, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [6:162]

According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, 'Ata', Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمهم الله تعالى and others, the imperative *wanhar* means 'sacrifice or offer oblation'. Some people have attributed to some leading exegetes that they have taken this imperative to mean: 'Fold your hands or arms on the chest' Ibn Kathīr holds such narrations as *'munkar'*, (that is, a narration which is narrated by a weak narrator and contradicts the narration of a stronger and more reliable authority.)

The Enemy of the Prophet ﷺ is Cut Off

Verse [108:3] إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ (Surely, it is your enemy whose traces are cut off.) The word *shāni'* as used in the original is derived from *sha'n* and means 'one who hates, traducer, insulter'. This verse was revealed in connection with the unbelievers who used to taunt the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and referred to him as *'abtar'*. Most narratives identify the traducer as 'Āṣ Ibn Wā'il, others identify him as 'Uqbah and yet others identify him as Ka'b Ibn Ashraf. Allah granted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ the Kauthar, that is, abundant goodness which includes a multitude of children. How wonderful are the works of Allah! There is no scarcity of lineal children of the holy Prophet ﷺ. Furthermore, a Prophet is the spiritual father of his entire Ummah which comprises his spiritual children. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is the spiritual father of his entire Ummah till the end of time and as such will have the largest number of spiritual children compared to the Ummahs of the previous Prophets. In this way, the enemy has been rebutted, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, their argument has been rebuffed that it is not the Prophet ﷺ, but his enemies are, *'abtar'* or cut off.

Note

Imagine how Allah has raised the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and exalted his reputation in every nook and corner of the world since the

inception of his prophet-hood till today, and it will continue to be so until the end of time. His blessed name is recited along with Allah's name five times a day from the minarets. In the Hereafter, he will be granted the (Al-Maqām Al-Maḥmūd) Praised Station where he will make the Grand Intercession on behalf of the entire progeny of 'Ādam عليه السلام. On the contrary, ask the world history: Where are the children of 'Āṣ Ibn Wā'il? Where are the children of Ka'b Ibn Ashraf ? where are the children of 'Uqbah, and what happened to their families? Their very own names have been lost to the world. No one cares to remember them. They have become unknown who thought that soon the Holy Prophet ﷺ will become unknown. They have left this world and the strings of their lineage have been cut off. Their names have been preserved in Islamic traditions only for purposes of interpretation of relevant verses. فَاعْتَبِرُوْا يَا أُوْلِى الْأَبْصَارِ "So, O People of insight, take note !" [59:2].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Kauthar
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn

(The Disbelievers)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 6 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

قُلْ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١﴾ لَآ أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَآ أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُوْنَ مَآ
أَعْبُدُ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَآ أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُّمْ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَآ أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُوْنَ مَآ أَعْبُدُ ﴿٥﴾
لَكُمْ دِيْنُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِيْنِ ﴿٦﴾

Say, "O disbelievers, [1] **I do not worship that which you worship,** [2] **nor do you worship the One whom I worship.** [3] **And neither I am going to worship that which you have worshipped,** [4] **nor will you worship the One whom I worship.** [5] **For you is your faith, and for me, my faith."** [6]

Virtues and Characteristics of the Sūrah

Sayyidah 'Ā'shah ﵂ reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said that it is better to recite two *sūrahs* in the *sunnah* prayer of *fajr*, namely, the Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ. [Transmitted by Ibn Hishām as quoted by Maẓharī]. Ibn Kathīr cites several traditions in which a large number of Companions report that they heard the Messenger of Allah often recite Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and Al-Ikhlāṣ in the *sunnah* prayer of *fajr* and *maghrib*. Some of the Companions requested the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to teach them some supplications to recite at the time of sleeping. He taught them to recite Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and said that this will give them immunity from idolatry. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd]. Sayyidnā

Jubair Ibn Muṭ'im ﷺ says that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him whether he wished to be the happiest, most prosperous and well-to-do person among his comrades when he goes out on a journey. He replied: "Yes, Messenger of Allah, I certainly do wish that." The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him to recite the last five surahs of the Qur'ān starting from Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn to the end, and to start every surah with *Bismillah*, and to end with *Bismillah*. Sayyidnā Jubair ﷺ says that in those days he used to be distressed, miserable and man of little provisions for journeys compared to his comrades. But when he started acting upon this teaching of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he became more prosperous than others. [Maẓharī with reference to Abū Ya'lā]. Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ reports that once a scorpion bit the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so he asked for water and salt. He applied the water on the spot where the scorpion bit him, and he recited Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn, Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās. [Maẓharī]

Cause of Revelation

Ibn Isḥāq reports from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that Walīd Ibn Mughīrah, 'Āṣ Ibn Wā'il, Aswad Ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib and Umayyah Ibn Khalaf approached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and proposed a compromise to him to the effect that he should worship their idols for a year, and they would worship Allah for a year. [Qurṭubī]. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, as recorded in Ṭabarānī, the pagans of Makkah proposed to the Messenger of Allah: ﷺ "We shall give you so much of wealth that you will become the richest man in Makkah; we shall give you whichever woman you like in marriage; we are willing to follow and obey you as our leader on condition that you do not speak ill of our gods. If you do not agree to this, then let us agree that you worship our gods for a year and we would worship your God for another year" [Maẓharī].

According to Abū Ṣaliḥ's report, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ narrates that the pagans of Makkah made the following proposal for compromise: "At least touch some of our gods, we will believe in you." Upon this, Jibra'īl ﷺ descended with Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn.

This Sūrah is the Sūrah of disavowal from the actions of the pagans, and enjoins the Muslims to worship Allah alone to the exclusion of all forms of pagan worship.

The Traditions cited above indicate that the pagans had made many

proposals to the Holy Prophet ﷺ not once or in a single session, but on different occasions and in different sessions in the hope that at one time or another a compromise might be reached. Therefore, there was a need to respond to all the proposals definitely and decisively, and thus frustrate their hope once and for all. All these incidents might have taken place at different times and different places. The purport of the Sūrah is to prevent or prohibit any such compromise.

Verse [109:2] لَآ أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ (I do not worship that which you worship,) In this Sūrah, the statements are repeated. The repetition has been explained in different ways by different authorities. Bukhārī explains it thus: When two identical, or near identical, expressions occur side by side, many commentators interpret one of them as happening in the present time and the other as going to happen in the future time. Thus there is no meaningless repetition. The second and the third verses refer to the present time, meaning 'I do not worship at the present time what you are worshipping, nor do you worship at the present time what I am worshipping'. That is, 'I believe in Oneness of Allah and worship Him only, whereas you believe in multiple gods and goddesses and worship them'. Verses [4 and 5] refer to the future time, meaning 'neither is there a possibility that I will ever worship what you are going to worship in the future, nor will you worship what I will persist in worshipping.' In other words, 'I will persist in my belief of Divine Oneness and worship of Him and you will persist in belief of multiple gods and goddesses and worship of them'. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawi رحمه الله تعالیٰ has preferred this interpretation in Bayānul-Qur'ān, (and the translation given above is based on it.) However, he disagrees with Bukhārī's interpretation of the word *dīn*, which Bukhārī interprets as 'the religion of disbelief and the religion of Islam' respectively, in verse [6] لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ "For you is your faith, and for me, my faith" meaning the proposed compromise or peace agreement is not acceptable. I shall continue to follow my faith and you may go on following your faith, and suffer its disastrous consequences. In Bayānul-Qur'ān, however, the word *dīn* has been interpreted as *jazā'* or 'retribution or requital'.

Ibn Kathīr prefers another interpretation. He expounds that the particle *ma* is used in two ways: [1] as *mawṣūlah* or relative pronoun in the sense of *al-ladhī* [that which]; and [2] as masdariyah transforming

into infinitive the verb it governs. In this Sūrah, the first *mā* is a relative pronoun in the sense of *al-ladhī*, and the second *mā* is an infinitival particle. Thus in verses [2 & 3] the particle is a relative pronoun and may be paraphrased thus: 'I do not worship the deities that you worship nor do you worship the One Whom I worship' and in verses [4 & 5] the particle is an infinitival particle and may be paraphrased thus: ولا انا عابدٌ عبادتكم ولا انتم عابدون عبادتي 'I will never adopt your mode or manner of worship, nor will you adopt the manner in which I worship'. In this way, verses [2 & 3] show that the objects of worship are different from each other, and verses [4&5] show the differences in the modes of worship. In sum, 'neither our objects of worship, nor our manner of worship, are commonly shared by us; they are different.' In this way, it is seen that there is no real repetition, because while the formal expressions might be identical or near identical, but deeper semantic meanings are different . The mode of worship was revealed to the Prophet by Allah ﷺ and passed on to the Muslims through him. The pagan manner of worship is self-fabricated. Ibn Kathīr prefers this interpretation, and says that this is the exact meaning that emanates from the credo of Islam: لا اله الاّ الله محمّد رسُول الله "There is no object worthy of worship except Allah, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah". Only the mode and manner of worship sanctioned by Allah is credible, and should be followed by Muslims. Ibn Kathīr adds that the concluding verse لَكُمْ دِيْنُكُمْ وَلِىَ دِيْنِ (For you is your faith, and for me, my faith) yields the sense of other verses in the Qur'ān, as for instance in [10: 41] فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوْكَ فَقُلْ لِّى عَمَلِىْ وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ And if they belie you, say, for me, my deeds, and for you, your deeds and in [28:55] لَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ (For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds). Thus the sum total of the word *din*, according to Ibn Kathīr, refers to the 'deeds of religion' and its purport would be the same as explicated in Bayānul-Qur'ān, in that each one will be requited for his own deeds.

Other commentators have interpreted the two sentences in a third way. According to them, the particle is retained in both places as a relative pronoun, and in both the sentence is taken as representing present tense. They in fact maintain that the repetition of the two sentences have been used as a rhetorical device and employed by deliberate design to secure emphasis. Not every repetition is unpleasant or meaningless, even though the same idea may be reiterated by the same

wording, as for instance in [94: 5-6] فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا (Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease) Verse [6] is the repetition of verse [5] and is deliberately reiterated to secure emphasis, as well as to reject outright the several proposals made on different occasions. [Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Jarīr].

Peace Treaty with Unbelievers is Permissible in Some Cases but not in Others

Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn dismisses out of hand the many proposals of compromise offered by the pagans and declares dissociation from them. But the Holy Qur'ān itself has said in [8:61] وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا (And if they tilt towards peace, you tilt towards it." that is, enter into peace treaty with the infidels or pagans or non-Muslims. Moreover, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madīnah, he entered into peace treaty with the Jews . Therefore, some of the commentators have opined that Surah Al-Kāfirūn has been abrogated. Their basic argument pivots around the verse لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ (For you is your faith, and for me, my faith). They contend that this is apparently in conflict with the ordinances of *jihād*, but this is not true, because the verse does not guarantee, nor does it even permit, the infidels to maintain their infidelity. It simply means what is stated in [28:55] لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ (For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds), that is, as you sow, so shall you reap. In fact, the correct position held by the majority of the scholars is that this Sūrah is not abrogated. The proposals of compromise that were offered by the pagans at the time of the revelation of the present Sūrah are still prohibited, and the peace treaties allowed by 8:61 or entered into by the Holy Prophet ﷺ are still permissible. It is necessary to understand the circumstances and conditions of the treaty and take a proper decision accordingly. In one of his Traditions, the Holy Prophet ﷺ laid down the general principle of peace treaty with the infidels and pagans, thus: الاصلحاً احلّ حرامًا اوحرّم حلالاً (Every compromise is permitted except the one which turns prohibited things into lawful and lawful things into forbidden.) If the various peace proposals made by the pagans are carefully analyzed, they were all certainly and definitely purported to mix elements of pagan beliefs and practices with Islamic beliefs and practices, thus creating confusion; and in some cases they required Muslims to renounce Islam [albeit temporarily] and commit themselves to paganism. Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn

denounces such treaties, and declares dissociation from paganism. Analyzing the peace pact with the Jews, on the other hand, it is seen clearly that it did not in anyway require Muslims to denounce or renounce Islam, nor did it require them to mix elements of un-Islamic beliefs with the true faith. Islam is the religion that stands for tolerance, kindness, politeness and peace more than any other religion. However, all these ethical principles can be applied in the matters of human rights. There is no room for compromise in the matter of Divine Law or the basic tenets of Divine religion . Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn
Ends here

Sūrah An-Naṣr

(The Help)

This Sūrah is Madnī, and it has 3 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

إِذَا جَآءَ نَصْرُاللّٰهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ﴿١﴾ وَرَاَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُوْنَ فِىْ دِيْنِ اللّٰهِ
اَفْوَاجًا ﴿٢﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ ط اِنَّهٗ كَانَ تَوَّابًا ﴿٣﴾

When there comes Allah's help and the Victory, [1] **and you see people entering Allah's (approved) religion in multitudes,** [2] **then pronounce the purity and praise of your Lord, and seek forgiveness from Him. Surely He is Ever-Relenting.** [3]

Name of the Sūrah and place of its revelation

According to the consensus of scholars, this Sūrah was revealed in Madīnah. Its other name is Sūrah At-Tawdī'. The word Tawdī' means 'to bid farewell'. As this Sūrah indicates the approach of the demise of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it bids farewell to him and is thus entitled Sūrah At-Tawdī'.

The Last Sūrah and the Last Verses of the Noble Qur'ān

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that Sūrah An-Naṣr was the last Sūrah to be revealed. [Qurṭubī]. This means that this was the last complete Sūrah that was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. No complete Sūrah was revealed after this. Some individual verses reported to have been revealed after this are not in conflict with this statement, because no complete Sūrah was sent

down after the present one. It is like Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah which is said to be the first Sūrah, while a few verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq, a few verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir, and a few verses of other Sūrahs were revealed even before Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, because it means that it was the first Sūrah to be revealed completely. No complete Sūrah was revealed before Al-Fātiḥah.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ reports that this Sūrah was revealed during the Farewell Pilgrimage, and shortly after that a fragment of verse [3] of Sūrah [5] اَلْيَوْمَ اَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ (...Today, I have perfected your religion for you_[5:3]) was revealed. After these two revelations, the Messenger of Allah lived only for eighty days, after which he passed away. After these two revelations, the Holy Prophet ﷺ received the verse of *kalalah*. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ lived for fifty days. After that he received the following verse [9:128] of Sūrah [9] لَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيْزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَاعَنِتُّمْ (Surely, there has come to you a Messenger from amongst you , hard on whom is your suffering, for the good of you he craves...) After this revelation, he lived for 35 days. After this verse was revealed the following verse: [2:281] اِتَّقُوْا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُوْنَ فِيْهِ اِلَى اللّٰهِ (And be fearful of a day when you shall be returned to Allah...). After this verse he lived only for twenty-one days, and according to Muqātil, he lived for seven days only and passed away. [Qurṭubī].

Verse [110:1] اِذَاجَاءَ نَصْرُاللّٰهِ وَالْفَتْحُ (When there comes Allah's help and the victory). The expression 'victory' here is in reference to 'the promised Victory or Conquest of Makkah'. There is complete unanimity on this historical fact. However, the scholars disagree whether this Sūrah was revealed before or after the Conquest. The phrase *idhā jā'a* [when there comes] apparently indicates that its revelation took place before the Conquest. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī cites a narration from Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ which concurs with this view, in which it is stated that this Sūrah was revealed while returning from the expedition of *Khaibar*. It is a known fact that the victory of *Khaibar* took place prior to the Conquest of Makkah. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī cites, on the authority of 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid, Sayyidnā Qatādah's ﷺ statement that the Prophet ﷺ lived for two years after the revelation of this Sūrah. Narratives that report that it was revealed on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah or on the occasion of the Farewell

Pilgrimage may be explained by saying that the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have recited this Sūrah and proclaimed it on one of those occasions; as a result people must have thought that it was revealed on that occasion. Please refer to Bayānul Qur'ān for fuller explanation.

Several Prophetic Traditions and statements of the Companions narrate that this Sūrah indicates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has fulfilled his task, and accomplished his mission of life, and he could look forward to returning to his Lord in full favor as his death was approaching fast. The Sūrah teaches the Holy Prophet ﷺ the beautiful manners of asking Allah's forgiveness and offering constant praise and thanks to his Lord.

It is reported in Muqātil's narration that when this Sūrah was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited it in a gathering of the blessed Companions, among whom were Sayyidnā Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنهم. All were happy at the revelation of this Sūrah, because it contained the glad tidings of the Conquest of Makkah, but Sayyidnā 'Abbās رضي الله عنه began to weep. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him the reason for weeping, and he replied that it covertly conveys the termination of your life and nearness of your death. The Holy Prophet ﷺ confirmed this. Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records a similar explanation of this Sūrah given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه in which there is the addition that when Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه heard this, he concurred with him and said: 'I do not know anything about it other than what you [Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه] have said'. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī who graded it as *ḥasan, ṣaḥīḥ* vide Qurṭubī]

Verse [110:2] وَرَاَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُوْنَ فِيْ دِيْنِ اللّٰهِ اَفْوَاجًا (And you see people entering Allah's [approved] religion in multitudes,) Before the conquest of Makkah there were many people who were almost convinced of the verity of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and Islam, but there were several factors that were obstructing them to embrace the religion. Some people were afraid of the Quraishite opposition, or they were hesitant for some other reason. The Conquest of Makkah removed those obstacles, and people entered the fold of Islam in throngs. Seven hundred people from Yemen embraced the religion, and joined the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the way, they recited the call to prayer [*adhān*] and recited the Qur'ān. In this way, the populace of Arabia embraced the religion of Islam and entered into its fold

in droves.

When the approach of death is sensed, one needs to exert oneself immensely in *Tasbīḥ* and *Istighfār*

Verse [110:3] فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّکَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ (then pronounce the purity and praise of your Lord, and seek forgiveness from Him...) Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah Ṣiddiqah ﷺ says that after the revelation of this Sūrah, whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ performed a prayer, he would recite the following supplication: سُبْحَانَکَ ربّنا وبحمدک اللّٰهُمَّ اغفرلی (I pronounce Your purity, O Allah, our Lord, and praise be to You, O Allah, forgive me.) [Bukhārī].

Sayyidah 'Umm Salamah ﷺ says that after the revelation of this Sūrah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to often recite the following supplication: سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهٖ اَسْتَغْفِرُاللّٰهَ وَاَتُوْبُ اِلَيْهِ (I pronounce the purity of Allah, and praise be to Him. I seek Allah's forgiveness and I repent to Him.) He used to say, "I have been commanded to do so." In evidence, he used to recite this Sūrah.

Sayyidnā Abu Hurairah ﷺ says that after the revelation of this Sūrah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to exert himself in the worship of Allah so immensely that his feet would swell. [Qurṭubī].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Naṣr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Lahab

(The Flame)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 5 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

تَبَّتْ يَدَآ أَبِى لَهَبٍ وَّتَبَّ ﴿١﴾ مَآ أَغْنٰى عَنْهُ مَالُهٗ وَمَا كَسَبَ ﴿٢﴾
سَيَصْلٰى نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَّامْرَأَتُهٗ ۚ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ﴿٤﴾ فِى
جِيْدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّنْ مَّسَدٍ ﴿٥﴾

Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab, and perish he! [1] **Neither his wealth availed him, nor what he earned.** [2] **He will soon enter a fire, full of flames,** [3] **and his wife as well, the wicked**[1] **carrier of firewood.** [4] **In her neck there is a rope of twisted palm-fibre.** [5]

Name and Nickname of Abū Lahab

Abū Lahab [Father of Flame] was the Nickname of 'Abd-ul-'Uzzā, one of the sons of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. As he was ruddy in complexion, he was nicknamed Abū Lahab [Father of Flame]. The Qur'ān did not mention his real name, because it smacked of paganism, and the last element '*lahab*' [Flame] in the nickname has also nexus with the flame of Hell. This person was the inveterate enemy and persecutor of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and violently opposed Islam. Whenever the Holy Prophet ﷺ invited the people to Islamic Faith, he would stand up and cry lie to his message. [Ibn

(1) The word 'wicked' is though not available in the text in express terms, the *naṣb* on *ḥammālah,* which is termed in Arabic grammar as '*naṣb* '*aladh-dhamm*' carries this meaning. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

Kathīr]

Cause of Revelation

It is recorded in the two Ṣaḥīḥs that when the verse وَاَنْذِرْ عَشِيْرَتَكَ الْاَقْرَبِيْنَ (Warn your closest relatives - 26:214) was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ ascended the mount Ṣafā and cried out to the tribe of Quraish in a manner that was known among them for warning of an attack by the enemy. Some narratives maintain that he called the different Makkan clans by name, the clan of Banū 'Abd Munāf, Banū 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib and others. All the clans of Quraish gathered around him, and he said to them: 'If I were to tell you that the enemy is about to attack you in the morning or in the evening, would you believe me?' They all unanimously replied in the affirmative. Then he said: 'Verily, I am a warner sent to you before the coming of a severe torment (as a result of disbelief or paganism). Abū Lahab then responded: تَبًّا لَكَ اَلِهٰذَا جَمَعْتَنَا 'Ruin may seize you ! Is it for this purpose that you have called us together?' and picked up a stone to hit him. Thus this Sūrah was revealed.

Verse [111:1] تَبَّتْ يَدَآ اَبِىْ لَهَبٍ وَّتَبَّ (Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab, and perish he!) The word *yad* literally means a 'hand'. Because hands play a very important role in all of human works and actions, often yad (hand) refers to the human person, as in the phrase ذٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاكَ (...All this is due to what your hands have sent forth...22:10). Baihaqī has recorded on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that one day Abū Lahab said to the people that Muḥammad ﷺ says that such-and-such a thing will happen after death. Then, pointing to his hands, said that none of those things have come into these hands; then he addressed his hands and said: تبًّا لكما ماارىٰ فيكما شيئًا ممّا قال محمد (Perish you! I do not see any of the things Muḥammad ﷺ said in you.) Therefore, the Qur'ān attributes his destruction to his hands.

The verb *tabba* is derived from *tabab* which means 'to perish'. In verse [1], the first sentence تَبَّتْ يَدَآ اَبِىْ لَهَبٍ (Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab) is in the form of a prayer invoking or imprecating destruction upon Abū Lahab, and the second sentence *wa tabba* is the declarative sentence prophesying the consequence of the invocation. The first sentence was invoked against him to satisfy the indignation of the Muslims, because when Abū Lahab imprecated destruction upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it was the desire of the Muslims that imprecation be invoked against him.

Allah thus fulfilled their desire, and also informed them that the invocation has taken effect and he perished. Seven days after the battle of Badr, he developed a terrible case of plague because of which people avoided him. They regarded the disease as infectious and were afraid that it might be transmitted by contact, so they forced him to live in an isolated house, and they did not come into contact with him at all. He at last died in this state. His dead body lay untouched in his house for three days. When his body began to rot giving out unbearable stench, people taunted his sons, and they hired laborers to take it away and bury it. They dug a pit in the ground, pushed his body into it with a stick and covered it with stones. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān from Rūḥ].

Verse [111:2] مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُ مَالُه' وَمَا كَسَبَ (Neither his wealth availed him, nor what he earned.) The phrase *mā kasab* [what he earned] could refer to the profits that accrued to him from investment of his wealth in business, and it could also imply 'children', for the children of a person are also referred to (in Arabic) as his earning. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﵂ reports that the Messenger of Allah said:

ان اطيب ما اكل الرّجل من كسبه وان ولده من كسبه

"The best and the purest thing a man eats is from his earnings and his children are part of his earnings".

This means that eating from the earnings of one's children is tantamount to eating from one's own earnings. [Qurṭubī]

Therefore, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﵂, Mujāhid, 'Aṭā', Ibn Sīrīn and others interpret *mā kasab* [what he earned] as referring to 'children'. Allah had granted Abū Lahab abundant wealth and many children, and these two factors led him to be ungrateful, and caused him to be proud and arrogant. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵄ says that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called his people to faith and warned them about the Divine punishment, Abū Lahab said: "Even if what my nephew says is true, I will save myself from the painful torment on the Day of Judgement with my wealth and my children." Thus Allah revealed verse [2] مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُ مَالُه' وَمَا كَسَبَ, that is, when the Divine torment seized him in this world, neither his wealth nor his children benefited him!

Verse [111:3] سَيَصْلٰى نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ (He will enter a fire, full of flames.) That is, either on the Day of Judgment or immediately after his death, while in

grave, he will be pushed into the blazing fire. There is a rhetorical relationship between Abū Lahab and *dhāta lahab* [full of flames].

The Fate of 'Umm Jamīl, the Wife of Abū Lahab

Verse [111:4] وَامْرَاَتُهٗ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ (And his wife as well, the wicked, the carrier of firewood.) As Abū Lahab was a vehement enemy of the Holy Messenger ﷺ, his wife too was supportive of her husband in his disbelief, rejection, obstinacy, and in persecuting the Holy Prophet ﷺ. She was a sister of Abū Sufyān, and daughter of Harb Ibn 'Umayyah. Her nickname was Umm Jamīl. The Qur'ān makes plain in this verse that this wretched woman will also roast with her husband in the fire of Hell. She is described as حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ which literally means 'the carrier of firewood'. Idiomatically, Arabs use this expression to refer to a 'tale-bearer ', that is, one who gathers pieces of gossip and carries them between individuals and families in order to ignite the fires of discord and enmity between people, exactly as one would gather firewood to kindle the fire. This telltale woman improperly carried information concerning the private affairs of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and the blessed Companions in an attempt to ignite and instigate trouble. In this verse too, the phrase 'the carrier of firewood' has been interpreted by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah رحمهما الله تعالى and a group of commentators to mean that 'She was a tale-bearer' while Ibn Zaid, Ḍaḥḥāk and other commentators رحمهم الله تعالى retain it in its original sense, and explain that she literally used to collect thorny branches from the jungle, and place them in the path of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in order to harm him - hence the description: 'carrier of firewood'. [Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr].

Some scholars explain that just as she used to help her husband in this world to promote disbelief and tyranny and to assist him in harming the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, she will add to the torment of her husband in the Hereafter. She will collect the branches of *zaqqūm* and other trees and add them as fuel to the fire of Hell in which her husband would be roasting. [Ibn Kathīr].

Tale-Bearing: A Gravely Major Sin

It is recorded in the two Ṣaḥīḥs that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that a tale-bearer (to harm others) will not enter Paradise. Fuḍail Ibn 'Iyāḍ رحمه الله تعالى says that there are three evil deeds of man that destroy all his righteous actions . They are: [1] backbiting; [2]

tale-bearing; and [3] lying. 'Aṭā' Ibn Sā'ib رحمه الله تعالیٰ says that he asked Sha'bī رحمه الله تعالیٰ about the Prophetic Tradition in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: لایدخل الجنّة سافک دم ولا مشّاء بنمیمة ولا تاجر یربی "Three types of people will not enter Paradise: [1] a murderer; [2] a tale-bearer; and [3] a trader who is involved in usury." 'Aṭā' رحمه الله تعالیٰ says that I cited this Tradition to Sha'bi and asked him in a surprising tone that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has equated 'a tale-bearer' with a murderer and a usurer. He replied: "Indeed, tale-bearing is the root cause of murder and usurpation of wealth." [Qurṭubī]

Verse [111:5] فِىْ جِيْدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّنْ مَّسَدٍ (In her neck there is a rope of twisted palm-fibre.) The *masd* with the letter-s-bearing *sukūn* [quiescence or rest] is an infinitive which means 'to twist rope or cord, or to twist it strongly and tightly'. If the word is read as *masad* with the letters *m-s* bearing *fatḥa* [= a-a], the word refers to fibres. It is also a rope made of 'twisted fibres of palm tree' or 'tightly braided fibres of coconut tree' or 'cord that has been woven strongly' or 'coil or cable formed by winding iron strands together'. [al-Qāmūs]. Some scholars have preferred to translate it specifically as 'a rope made of twisted fibres of palm tree' and no other string or twine. This is in conformity with the general usage of the Arabs. Basically, it refers to any string or twine or rope or cord or coil or cable formed by intertwining strands of any material. In keeping with this general sense of the word, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضی الله عنه, 'Urwah Ibn Zubair رضی الله عنه and others said that in this context the phrase حَبْلٌ مِّنْ مَّسَدٍ "rope of masad" refers to 'rope formed by twisting iron strands'. This will be her condition in Hell where an iron-collar will be in her neck. Sayyidnā Mujāhid رضی الله عنه interprets *min masad* as *min ḥadīd*, that is, 'of iron'. [Maẓharī].

Sha'bi, Muqātil and other commentators have taken the phrase *min masad* to refer to 'a rope made of twisted fibres of palm tree' and said that Abū Lahab and his wife were extremely wealthy and were looked upon as leaders of their nation but, on account of his wife's mean disposition and miserliness, she used to collect firewood from the jungle, bind them together with a rope, place the bundle on her head and put its rope round her neck, so that it might not fall from her head. This practice of hers one day led to her destruction. She had a bundle of wood on her head and the rope in her neck. She felt tired and sat down. Then fell, was choked and

died. According to this second interpretation, the verse describes her mean disposition and the disastrous consequences of her sadistic behavior. [Maẓharī]. However, such a conduct in Abū Lahab's family, especially of his wife, was hardly conceivable; therefore, most commentators have preferred the first interpretation. Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Lahab
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ

(The Sincerity)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 4 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 4

قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾ اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾ لَمْ يَلِدْ ۙ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَمْ
يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾

Say, "The truth is: Allah is One. [1] **Allah is Besought of all, needing none.** [2] **He neither begot anyone, nor was begotten.** [3] **And equal to Him has never been any one."** [4]

Cause of Revelation

Tirmidhī, Ḥākim and others have recorded that the pagans of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "O Muḥammad! Tell us about the ancestry of your Lord." So Allah revealed this Sūrah. Some narratives ascribe this inquiry to the Jews of Madīnah. In view of these conflicting reports, there is a divergence of opinion as to whether this is a Makkī Sūrah or Madanī Sūrah. According to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Aṭā', 'Ikrimah and Jābir رضي الله عنه, the Sūrah is Makkī and, according to Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk رحمه الله and others, it is Madanī. According to one narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, it is Makkī and, according to another, it is Madanī [Qurṭubī].

According to another narration, the pagans added to their question whether Allah was made of gold, silver or some other stuff, in response to which this Sūrah was revealed.

Virtues of the Sūrah

Imām Aḥmad has recorded a narration in his Musnad that a person came up to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, "I love this Sūrah [Al-Ikhlāṣ] immensely." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "Your love for it will cause you to enter Paradise." [Ibn Kathīr].

Tirmidhī has recorded on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the people to gather and said: "I shall recite to you a third of the Qur'ān?" When the people had congregated, he recited Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and said: "This is equal to a third of the Qur'ān." [Muslim].

In a lengthy Ḥadīth, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī have recorded that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Anyone who recites Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and the *mu'awwadhatain* (i.e. the last two *sūrahs* of the Holy Qur'ān) morning and evening, they shall be sufficient for him." In another narration, the wordings are: "They will suffice him against every affliction."]. [Ibn Kathīr]

Imām Aḥmad has recorded a narration in his Musnad on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I shall show you three such Sūrahs that are revealed in Torah, Injīl, Zabūr and the Qur'ān. Do not sleep at night until such time that you have recited them. They are Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and the *mu'awwadhatain*." Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir رضي الله عنه says that since I have heard this, I did not miss reciting them. [Ibn Kathīr].

Oneness of Allah

Verse [112:1] قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ Say, (The truth is: Allah is One.) The imperative *qul* (Say) is directly addressed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, thus indicating that he is Allah's Prophet and Messenger. This verse directs and commands him to convey Allah's message to mankind. 'Allah' is the personal name of that Necessary Being Whose non-existence is inconceivable. He comprises all the attributes of perfection and is free from, or above, or overrides all kinds of imperfections. The epithets *aḥad* and *wāḥid* are both applied to Allah which are normally translated as 'One' but the word *aḥad* includes an additional sense which signifies that Allah is beyond composition, plurality and resemblance, which means that He is neither composed of

any elements, nor does He have any partner, nor has He any resemblance to anything. This is a response to those who asked about Allah whether He is made of gold or silver or pearls. This concise statement covers all aspects of discussion on the Divine Being and His attributes. The imperative *qul* [say] points to the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If analyzed properly, this brief sentence covers all the detailed discussions expounded in voluminous books of theology.

Verse [112:2] اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ (Allah is Besought of all, needing none) The word *ṣamad* bears several literal senses. Therefore, the Qur'ānic exegetical scholars have assigned different meanings to this verse. Ṭabarānī , the leading authority on Prophetic Traditions, in his *kitāb-us-Sunnah,* has collected all the interpretations of the Divine attribute *Aṣ-ṣamad* and concluded that they are all authentic, and comprehend all the attributes of our Lord that have been assigned to Him, but originally it refers to 'the chief who has no superior and to whom the people turn for the fulfilment of their desires and needs; thus all people depend on him, but he does not depend on any one.' [Ibn Kathīr].

Allah is Above having Children and Procreating

Verse [112:3] لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ (He neither begot anyone, nor was begotten.) This verse responds to those who had questioned about the ancestry of Allah. There is no analogy between Allah, the Creator, and His creation. While His creation comes into being through the biological process of procreation, Allah Himself has no children, nor is He the child of anyone.

Verse [4] وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ (And equal to Him has never been any one.) The word *kufuwan,* as used in the original, means an 'example', a 'similar thing', 'one equal in rank and position'. Thus this verse means that there is no one in the entire universe, nor ever was, nor ever can be, who is similar to Allah, or equal in rank with Him, or resembling Him in His attributes, works and powers in any degree whatsoever.

Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ: A Comprehensive Concept of Allah's Oneness and a complete Negation of Shirk

There were many types of people who denied the Divine Oneness, and set up partners or rivals to Allah. Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ negates all types of such wrong belief systems, and imparts a comprehensive lesson of Divine Oneness. Among the unbelievers, several types may be identified. There

is a group that denies the very existence of God [the atheists]. Another group believes in the existence of God, but denies that His existence is 'Necessary'. A third group believes in God's existence and in His existence as 'Necessary' but denies His attributes of perfection. A fourth group believes in God's Necessary Existence and in His attributes of perfection, but denies Oneness of God and believes in and worship more than one gods and goddesses, and thus practices polytheism. Verse [1] refutes vehemently all such false belief systems. Verse [2] refers to the practices of those who do worship Allah alone, but believe that there are also other helpers who can fulfil their needs, desires and ambitions. The Divine attribute *Aṣ-ṣamad* denounces outright any such notion. A fifth group ascribes children to Allah and the phrase *lam yalid* [He neither begot anyone] repudiates this notion of theirs in the strongest terms. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Falaq

(Break of Dawn)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 5 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ﴿١﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴿٢﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ اِذَا وَقَبَ
﴿٣﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفّٰثٰتِ فِی الْعُقَدِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ اِذَا حَسَدَ ﴿٥﴾

Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of the daybreak [1] **from the evil of everything He has created,** [2] **and from the evil of the dark night when it penetrates,** [3] **and from the evil of the women who blow on the knots,** [4] **and from the evil of an envier when he envies.** [5]

Preliminary Remarks

This and the next Sūrah were revealed on the same occasion, and in the same event, as will be explained in the 'cause of revelation'. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn-ul-Qayyim has, therefore, written their commentary together. He writes that their blessings and benefits are abundant. All of the people require them and no one can dispense with them. They are very efficacious remedy for sorcery or magical spell, evil eye, and for all of the physical and spiritual calamities. In fact, if its reality is grasped fully, people will understand that they require it more than their breath, food, water, clothing and everything else.

Cause of Revelation

Musnad of Ahmad records that a Jewish person cast a magical spell on the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as a result of which he fell ill. Jibra'īl عليه السلام came

to him and informed him that a particular Jew had cast a spell on him, that he had tied knots in his hair to accomplish this objective, and it is thrown into a particular well. The Holy Prophet ﷺ sent some of his Companions to bring it from the well Jibra'īl عليه السلام had described. The Holy Prophet ﷺ untied the knots, and he was instantly cured. Jibra'īl عليه السلام informed him of the name of the Jew and the Holy Prophet ﷺ knew the culprit, but it was not in keeping with his compassionate disposition to avenge anyone in his personal matter. Therefore, this was never brought to the attention of the Jew guilty of the black magic, nor did any sign of complaint ever appear on the blessed face of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Being a hypocrite, he regularly attended the Holy Prophet's ﷺ gatherings.

The details of this incident are recorded in Sahih of Bukhari on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that a Jewish man cast a magic spell on the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as a result of which he sometimes felt confused whether or not he had done something. One day the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that Allah has shown him what his illness was and added: "Two men came to me in my dream. One of them sat by my head side while the other sat by my feet, and the following conversation ensued:

Question: 'What is wrong with this man?'

Answer: 'He is bewitched.'

Question: 'Who has bewitched him?'

Answer: 'Labīd Ibn A'ṣam. He is a member of the tribe of Banū Zuraiq who is an ally of the Jews, a hypocrite.'

Question: 'With what did he bewitch him?'

Answer: 'With a comb and hair from the comb.'

Question: 'Where is the comb?'

Answer: 'In the dried bark of a male date palm under a rock in a well called *Dharwan*.' "

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها says that the Holy Prophet ﷺ went to the well to remove the comb with the hair and said: "This is the well I was shown in my dream." He removed it from the well. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها asked

the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "Will you not make this public?" He replied: "Allah has cured me and I hate to cause harm to anyone." This implies that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not want to be the cause anyone's molestation, death or destruction, because this is what would have exactly happened if the incident was publicised.

According to a narration in Musnad of Aḥmad, this illness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ lasted for six months. According to other narratives, some of the Companions knew that this wicked act was performed by Labid Ibn A'sam, and they courteously said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "Why should we not kill this wicked person?" He made the same reply to them as he did to Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ؓ. According to Imām Tha'labī's narration, a Jewish boy was the attendant of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the hypocritical Jew flattered the boy and talked him into getting for him strands of the Prophet's ﷺ hair from his comb, and a few of its teeth. Having obtained these items, he tied eleven knots on a string and a needle was stuck into each knot. Labīd then placed this spell in the spathe of a male palm tree, and buried it under a stone in a well. On this occasion, the two Sūrahs were revealed, comprising eleven verses. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited one verse at a time and untied one knot each time, until all the knots were untied, and he felt freed from the tension of the witchcraft. [All these narratives have been adapted from Ibn Kathīr.]

Magic and its effect on the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Some people are surprised that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ should be affected by black magic. This is because some people do not have a complete grasp of how magic operates. It actually operates under physical causes, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not immune to the influence of physical causes, as for instance feeling the burning or heating sensation of fire, and feeling the cooling sensation of water; or certain natural factors causing fever or body temperature to rise; or other factors causing aches and pains, and other illnesses. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, or any other prophet for that matter, was not immune to the effects of such natural or physical causes. They can be affected by the hidden operations of magic which are no less natural or physical. Please see Sūrah Al-Baqarah, Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 1/ pp 264-278 for fuller explanation, especially p. 276 on 'Magic and Prophets'.

Mu'awwadhatain are Sūrahs that afford protection against physical and spiritual afflictions

It is a settled doctrine of every believer that Allah is the intrinsic cause of every gain and loss in this world as well as in the next world. Without the Divine will not a jot of gain or loss can be caused to anyone. The only way to fortify against all physical and spiritual injuries and harm is for man to place himself under the protection of Allah, and by his actions he should attempt to make himself capable of entering the Divine shelter.

Sūrah Al-Falaq directs how to seek the Divine protection against worldly calamities, and Sūrah An-Nās tells the way to seek Divine protection against the calamities of the Hereafter.

Virtues of _Mu'awwadhatain_

Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim records a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir ﷺ who reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Do you not see that there have been revealed to me verses tonight the like of which has not been seen before? Those are Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās." According to another narration, the like of *Mu'awwadhatain* has not revealed even in Torah, Injīl, or Zabūr or anywhere else in the Qur'ān. Another narration of Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir ﷺ reports that the Messenger of Allah taught him *Mu'awwadhatain* while they were on a journey. Then he recited them in the *maghrib ṣalāh* and said: "Recite these two Sūrahs whenever you go to sleep and whenever you get up." [Nasā'ī] According to another report, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has advised people to recite these two Sūrahs after every *ṣalāh* [Transmitted by Abū Dāwūd and Nasā'ī].

Imām Mālik recorded from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ﷺ: "whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ suffered from an ailment, he would recite the *Mu'awwadhatain,* blow over his hands, and then wiped his whole body with those hands. When his pain became acute on his death-bed, I would recite the *Mu'awwadhatain,* blow over his hands, and then he wiped them over himself, because my hands could not be the fitting substitute for his blessed hands. [All these narratives have been adapted from Ibn Kathīr].

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Khubayb ﷺ reports that it was raining one night and the sky had become intensely dark. We went out looking for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and when he was found, he said: "Say ." He

asked: "What should I say?" He said: "Recite قُلْ هُوَاللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ and *Mu'awwadhatain*. Reciting them thrice in the morning and thrice in the evening will fortify you against all kinds of perturbations."

In sum, it was the practice of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions to recite these two Sūrahs to protect themselves against all types of privations, trials and tribulations of life in this world, as well as of life in the next world.

Lexicological Analysis of important words and interpretation of the Sūrah

Verse [113:1] قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ (Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak.") The word *falaq* means 'to split or cleave' and here it is used in the sense of 'break of dawn'. In another verse, a similar quality of Allah is used in [6:96] فَالِقُ الْاِصْبَاحِ ([He is] the One who causes the dawn to break). Of all the Divine attributes, this particular attribute is used presumably because the darkness of night often causes evils and difficulties, and the daylight removes them. This attribute of Allah points to the fact that anyone who seeks protection in Allah, He will remove all afflictions from him. [Maẓharī]

The word *Sharr*: 'Allāmah Ibn Qayyim's Exposition

Verse [113:2] مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ (From the evil of everything He has created.) 'Allāmah Ibn Qayyim expounds that the word *sharr* (evil) is employed in two different senses: [1] pain, loss, injury, trouble, grief, distress and affliction which affect man directly, and they are by themselves troubles and afflictions; and [2] the factors that cause losses, injuries and afflictions. The second type covers unbelief, idolatry and all sins. The things from which the Qur'ān and Sunnah require man to seek refuge in Allah are either of these two types. The Traditional supplication that is *masnūn* after *ṣalāh* includes seeking of refuge from four things: [1] punishment of the grave; [2] punishment of the Hell-Fire; [3] hardships and privations of life; and [4] trials and tribulations of death. Of these, the first two are afflictions and punishments in their own right, and the last two are causes of afflictions and punishments.

Verse [113:2] مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ (From the evil of everything He has created) covers the evil of the entire creation. This verse was sufficient to guard against all mischief and calamities. But three particular forms of evil have

been singled out to seek protection which often cause calamities and afflictions.

The first thing singled out appears in verse [113:3] وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ اِذَا وَقَبَ (and from the evil of dark night when it penetrates.) The word *ghāsiq* is derived from *ghasaq* (to become dark or intensely dark). Thus Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Ḥasan and Mujāhid say that the word ghasiq stands for 'night'. The verb *waqaba* is derived from *wuqūb* which means for utter darkness 'to overspread completely and intensely'. The verse means : 'I seek refuge in Allah from the night when its darkness has completely and intensely overspread'. The word 'night' has been specifically mentioned because this is the time when Jinn, Satans, harmful insects, animals and reptiles appear. Thieves and robbers emerge at this time to carry out their crimes of stealing and other acts of wickedness. The enemies attack at this time. Black magic has the worst effect when it is intensely dark at night. As soon as the dawn approaches, the effects of all these things disappear and fade away. ['Allāmah Ibn Qayyim]

Verse [113:4] وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفّٰثٰتِ فِى الْعُقَدِ (and from the evil of the women who blow on the knots.) The word *naffāthāt* is derived from *nafth* which means 'to blow'. The word *'uqad* is the plural of *'uqdah* which means 'a knot'. The magicians usually tie knots on a string or piece of thread, recite magical incantations or formulae and blow on them as they do so. The phrase اَلنَّفّٰثٰتِ فِى الْعُقَدِ (...the women who blow on the knots) refers to female magicians. It is possible that the pre-adjectival noun of the adjective *naffāthāt* be *nufūs* [souls]. Thus this verse may be translated as 'the evil souls who blow on knots'. This translation would include men and women who carry out this evil practice. But most probably its pre-adjectival noun is 'womenfolk'. Women have been specifically mentioned perhaps because generally womenfolk have the natural disposition to carry out the evil practice of witchcraft; or probably because Labīd Ibn A'ṣam, whose black magic was the cause of revelation of this Sūrah, got this most heinous act done by his daughters. Hence, the act of witchcraft is ascribed to them.

The reason why protection is sought against magicians is firstly that the cause of revelation of these two Sūrahs was the incident of magic. Secondly, people are normally unaware of the act of magicians, and they do not pay attention to getting themselves exorcised. They are under the impression that it is some kind of medical ailment and try to get

themselves medically cured. In the meantime the magical effect continues to grow worse.

The third thing from which people are asked specifically to seek protection is *ḥasid* [jealous] and *ḥasad* [jealousy]. This has been specified for the same reasons as given above, because black magic was worked on the Prophet ﷺ on account of jealousy. The Jews and the hypocrites could not bear to see the rapid progress and expansion of Islam. They could not defeat him in outer combat; therefore they tried to satisfy their jealousy by performing witchcraft on him. There were uncountable number of green-eyed monsters against the Prophet ﷺ. That is the major reason why protection was sought against them. Jealousy of the jealous one gives him restless days and sleepless nights. He is at all times after causing loss to his envied person. Therefore, the harm he wishes to inflict is severe.

Ḥasad **[Jealousy] and** ***Ghibṭah*** **[Envy]**

The Arabic word *Ḥasad*, the English equivalent of which is 'jealousy', is invariably used in the bad sense. It generally means to desire the deprivation of the other man rather than one's own acquisition of any bliss that he may possess. Simply put, *Ḥasad* means that a person should feel unhappy at the better fortune and good quality that Allah has granted to another, and wishes that it should be taken away from the other person and given to him, or at least the other should be deprived of it. *Ḥasad* in this sense is totally forbidden and a major sin. This is the first sin that was committed in the heaven and also the first one committed on the earth. The Iblīs was jealous of 'Ādam عليه السلام in the heaven and the latter's son Qābīl was jealous of his brother Hābīl on earth. [Qurṭubī].

Ghibṭah, on the other hand, means to desire for oneself the same blessing as the other man has, without any idea of the latter's losing it. This is not only permissible but also desirable.

Summary and Conclusion

Apart from the general protection that is sought in this Sūrah, protection is sought from three specific evils. These are mentioned separately in verses three, four and five. Furthermore, in the first and the third specific evils particular restrictions are placed. The first specific evil *ghāsiq* [darkness] is restricted by the phrase إِذَا وَقَبَ "when it penetrates".

The third specific evil *ḥāsid* is restricted by the phrase إِذَا حَسَدَ "when he envies". The practice of witchcraft is left unrestricted because its harmful effect is general. The harmful effect of darkness is felt when there is total absence of light, plunging the night in intense and utter darkness. Likewise, jealousy may not cause harm to its object until the jealous one takes a practical step with word or deed to satisfy his heart. For until he takes a practical step, his being unhappy may be harmful to himself, but it is not harmful for the other person so that he may seek refuge from it. Hence, restrictions are placed on the first and the third specific evils.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Falaq
Ends here

Sūrah An-Nās
(The Mankind)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 6 verses

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ﴿١﴾ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ﴿٢﴾ اِلٰهِ النَّاسِ ﴿٣﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ
الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِىْ يُوَسْوِسُ فِىْ صُدُوْرِ النَّاسِ ﴿٥﴾
مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ﴿٦﴾

Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, [1] **the King of mankind,** [2] **the God of mankind,** [3] **from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws (when Allah's name is pronounced),** [4] **the one who whispers in the hearts of people,** [5] **whether from among the Jinn or Mankind.** [6]

Introductory Remarks

This Sūrah, the second of the *Mu'awwadhatain*, constitutes an extension of its predecessor and is in a way complementary to it, in that in Sūrah Al-Falaq the believers were enjoined to seek refuge with Allah against the hardships and privations of life in this world, while in the current Sūrah protection is sought from the trials and tribulations of the Hereafter. It was explained in Sūrah Al-Falaq that the word *sharr* could stand for 'evil' or 'harm' or even 'that which causes harm, anguish or distress'. In the present Sūrah, we are to seek refuge from the evil that is the cause of all sins, namely, the whisperings and insinuations of Satan. As the anguish and distress of the Hereafter is most severe, the Qur'ān

appropriately emphasizes at the end to seek Allah's protection against these evil powers.

Verse [114:1] قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ Say, (I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind,) The attributive name of Allah *rabb* stands for 'one who nurtures', and implies that the Supreme Nurturer takes care of everything under all circumstances. In the present verse, He is referred to as 'the Lord of mankind', while in the previous Sūrah He was referred to as 'the Lord of the daybreak', because in the foregoing Sūrah the purpose was to seek protection against the outer bodily hardships and privations of life, and they are not confined to human beings. Animals also suffer bodily hardships and difficulties, unlike the Satanic instigations which are restricted to man, and the Jinn are subjoined to him. [Maẓharī from Baiḍāwī]

Verses [114:2 & 3] مَلِكِ النَّاسِ. اِلٰهِ النَّاسِ (the King of mankind, the God of mankind.) The reason for adding these two attributes is that the word *rabb*, attributed to a particular thing, could refer to someone other than Allah also, as for instance رَبُّ الدَّارِ *rabb-ud-dār* [land-lord] or رَبُّ الْمَالِ *rabb-ul-māl* [owner of wealth]. But not every master or owner is a king. That is why the attributive name *malik* [King] has been added to indicate that He is not only the 'Lord of mankind' but also the 'King of mankind'. Furthermore, not every king is worthy of worship. Thus the third attributive name *ilāh* [God] has been added to *nās* [people]. The Divine wisdom in combining all three Divine attributes is that each attribute motivates protection. Every master has servants and takes care of them. Likewise, every king has subjects and looks after them. That the worshipped God protects His worshipper is even more obvious. Only Allah, and no other being, is characterized by these three attributes simultaneously. Therefore, seeking Allah's protection by invoking these attributes is the greatest protection, and the invocation is readily acceptable.

Since the first sentence contains the word *nās* (people), the second and the third verses should apparently refer to them with the pronouns by saying, مَلِكِهِمْ *malikihim* [their king] rather than repeating the word *nās* (people). However, this is an occasion of supplication and praise, and as such repetition needs to be employed by deliberate design to add force and clarity to the sublime emotion by creating natural rhyme, rhythm and

melodic sequence. Some scholars have explained the repitition of the word '*nās*' differently. They say that the word *nās* occurs five times in this Sūrah. In its first occurrence, it refers to the children. The word *rabb* that refers to nurturer-ship of Allah is a hint to this, because children need nurturing the most. Its second occurrence refers to youth, and the hint in the context is the word *malik* which refers to kingship of Allah. It bears political connotation and is appropriate to the youth. Its third occurrence refers to old age. Old people cut themselves off from the world and look up to Allah alone as the real support of life, and render Him alone true and unconditional obedience and to make Him alone the real object of his love and adoration. The context for this is *ilāh* [God] which points to the Divine worship. Its fourth occurrence refers to the righteous servants of Allah. The contextual hint for this is the word *waswasah* [evil whisperings] because the devil is the enemy of the righteous servants of Allah. His work is to cast evil prompting into the hearts of such people. Its fifth occurrence refers to mischief-makers because protection is sought from their mischief.

Verse [114:4] مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ (from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws [when Allah's name is pronounced].) After invoking three attributes of Allah, the present verse describes the one from whom protection is sought. He is 'the whisperer who withdraws'. The word *waswās* is originally an infinitive in the sense of *waswasah* 'to whisper [that is, to use breath instead of voice, when saying something in barely audible way]'. But here it is used as an hyperbolic expression to refer to 'Satan' in the sense that 'he is an embodiment of whisper'. Whispering of the Satan means that he invites people to his obedience by a superstitious discourse in a way that its subject is cast into man's heart, but no voice is heard. [Qurṭubī].

The word خَنَّاس *khannās* is derived from *khanasa* which means 'to sneak, recede or withdraw furtively'. The Satan is so named because he puts himself in a squatting [perched] position on the heart of man. So, when the latter becomes heedless, the former whispers, but when he remembers Allah, he withdraws furtively. When man becomes unmindful of Allah again, the Satan returns. Whenever man remembers Allah, he withdraws. This practice continues persistently. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

"Allah has built two houses in the heart of man, in one of which an angel resides and in the other the Satan. The angel urges him to do good works and the Satan induces him to do evil works. When man remembers Allah, the Satan withdraws. And when he stops remembering Allah, the Satan perches on the heart of man and pecks with his beak to whisper into it to do evil things." [Transmitted by Abū Ya'lā on the authority of Anas ﷺ, as quoted by Maẓharī].

Verse [114:6] مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ (whether from among the Jinn or Mankind.) This is explicative of the expression *waswās* occurring in verse [4], meaning that the devils from amongst mankind and the Jinn whisper into the breasts of mankind. Thus the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has been enjoined to constantly seek protection against the mischief of sneaking devils, whether from amongst the Jinn or from amongst human devils.

A question may arise here. It is obvious that the Satans can cast a voiceless evil prompting furtively into the hearts of people, but how the human devils can cast evil whisperings? They come forward publicly and use their voice, which is not *waswasah* [whisper]. The answer is that human beings too often cast doubts in the minds of people in an indirect way without uttering them explicitly. Shaikh 'Izzuddīn Ibn 'Abdus-Salām states, in his monograph 'al-Fawā'id fī Mushkilāt-il-Qur'ān', that the 'whisperer from mankind' refers to the whispering of one's own *nafs* (base faculties of the man himself). Just as the Satan casts evil thoughts into man's mind, likewise the base self of man urges him to do evil works. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has directed us to seek protection in Allah from the evil of our own self in the following supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعُوْذُبِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ نَفْسِىْ وَشَرِّ الشَّيْطَانِ وَشِرْكِهٖ

"O Allah! I seek asylum in You from the evil of myself, from the evil of the Satan and from the evil of idolatry."

The Importance of Seeking Protection against Satanic Whisperings

Ibn Kathīr states that Allah invokes three of His attributive names in this Sūrah, *rabb* [Lord], *malik* [King] and *ilāh* [God], and instructs man to seek refuge with Him against diabolical whisperings, because a Satanic companion is attached to every man, and at every step of the way, the latter's attempt is to destroy the former in different ways. First of all, he induces him to commit sins, and paves the way for him to willfully violate

the Divine laws and injunctions. If he does not succeed in this, he tries to contaminate and destroy his acts of obedience and worship by casting the thoughts of dissimulation, hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. He attempts to create doubts about authentic beliefs and doctrines of Islam in the minds of the learned scholars. The only one who can be saved from the evil of such Satanic pranks is the one whom Allah gives His protection.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: "There is not a single one of you, but his companion [a devil] has been assigned to him." The Companions enquired: 'Is such a devil companion joined to you also, O Messenger of Allah,?' He replied: 'Yes. However, Allah has helped me against him and he has become submissive to me. As a result, he only commands me to do good.'"

It is also confirmed in the two Ṣaḥīḥs from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه, who reported the story of Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah رضي الله عنها. Once while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was performing *I'tikaf* in the mosque, one of his wives Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah رضي الله عنها paid him a visit. When she decided to leave, he gave her company to the boundaries of the mosque. On the way, two men of the Anṣār saw them together, The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Wait! This is Ṣafiyyah bint Ḥuyayy [my wife]!" The two Companions exclaimed: سُبحان الله "Pure is Allah, O Messenger of Allah, [how can we have ill thoughts about you?]" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "Indeed, the devil runs through man's veins like the blood circulates. I feared that he might whisper evil thoughts in your minds. [That is why I had to call you and clarify that the lady with me was no other than my own wife.]"

Special Note

Just as it is necessary for man to avoid evil deeds, it is essential for Muslims to avoid occasions that may cause others to have ill thoughts about them. Should there arise an occasion which may give rise to such bad thoughts, they should immediately clarify the situation, and put an end to it then and there. In sum: This Tradition indicates that Satanic pranks are highly dangerous. It is not easy to avoid them unless we seek refuge with Allah.

A Clarification

There are two types of evil thoughts: [1] voluntary; and [2] involuntary. Here we are warned against voluntary thoughts that

proceed from the will or from one's own free choice. The involuntary thoughts are thoughts that occur without one's will or free choice. Such thoughts come to mind involuntarily and pass away. They are not harmful, nor are they sinful as long as they do not act upon them or speak about them .

A subtle difference between the two Sūrahs of *Mu'awwadhatain*

In the present Sūrah, *rabb* [Lord], *malik* [King] and *ilāh* [God], three Divine attributes have been invoked, while the evil from which protection is sought is only one, that is, the whispering. Conversely, in the previous Sūrah, only one attribute of Allah is mentioned, that is, *rabb-il-falaq* [Lord of the daybreak], but the evils from which protection is sought are many which are mentioned in three verses. This goes to show that the mischief of the Satan is the worst type of evil. The hardships and calamities that befall man in this world, affect his body and mundane affairs, unlike the Satanic pranks which affect man's mundane affairs as well his affairs of the Hereafter. The Satan is always after destroying man's after-life, and that is the most dangerous situation. If man suffers from physical injury or harm, he can find cure or remedy for it; but because the Satan lurks or lies hidden in ambush in every nook and corner of man's life to assault him unnoticed and pull him downwards, away from the Divine, it is not possible to resist him except with the protection granted by Allah. (Therefore, protection from him is sought by invoking three attributes of Allah.)

Human and Satanic Enemies: their differential treatments

One may have some enemies from mankind, and some from Satanic origin. The Holy Qur'ān has directed us to deal with these two kinds of enemies in different ways.

Ibn Kathīr in the preface of his commentary of the Holy Qur'ān has cited three verses of the Holy Qur'ān pertaining to this subject. All three of them have two parts. In the first part, Allah has instructed man to treat his human enemy with kindness, politeness, patience, mercy and compassion. If he does not desist from his evil ways, then *jihād* is prescribed in other verses. We need to wage armed struggle against the devilish elements of human society. But the only way to resist the Satanic enemy is to seek refuge with Allah. The first verse to this effect is in Sūrah Al-A'rāf [7:199]:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ

(Take to forbearance, and bid the Fair and ignore the ignorant.)

This pertains to defense against human enemy: In other words we need to grant courteous allowance for his offence, bid him to do good and forego revenge against injustice he might have committed. We must be easy in dealing with him and avoid causing him difficulty. This injunction is defence against human enemy and must be carried out in the first instance. But the next verse [7:200] of the same Sūrah pertains to the Satanic enemy as follows:

وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ إِنَّهٗ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ

"And if you are stricken with a strike from the Satan, seek refuge with Allah. Surely He is All-hearing, All-knowing."

In other words, if an evil suggestion comes to us from the Satanic enemy, then we need to seek refuge in Allah.

The second verse is in Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn [23:96-98]:

اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ

"Repel evil with that which is best.

وَقُلْ رَّبِّ أَعُوْذُبِكَ مِنْ هَمَزٰتِ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ وَأَعُوْذُبِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَّحْضُرُوْنِ

And say: 'O my Lord, I seek Your refuge from the from the strokes of the satans, and I seek Your refuge from that they come to me".

In the first sentence of these verses, the direction is given to repel the evil caused by human beings with good behavior. But, when it comes to repel the evil caused by Satan, the direction given is to seek refuge in Allah.

The third verse dealing with the same subject is :[41:34]

اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِيْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهٗ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهٗ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيْمٌ

Repel (evi) with what is best, and you will see that the one you had mutual enmity with him will turn as if he were a close friend." [34]"

This part of the verse directs how to repel the evil caused by human enemy. If we repel evil deed with a better deed, it would be possible for us

to win over our human enemies and they would become our most devoted friends. As opposed to a human enemy, the other part of the situation is contained in the next verse [36]. It deals with the slinking devil who is invisible, but effective in his attack. The verse reads:

وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

> "And should a stroke from Shaitan (Satan) strikes you, seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." [41:36]

The wordings of this verse are more or less the same as they occur in Sūrah Al-A'rāf. In other words, if an evil suggestion comes to us from the Satan, we are required to seek refuge in Allah, because that is the only defensive weapon against the invisible slinking, sly and cunning enemy. [Ibn Kathīr]

In sum, all three sets of verses discussed above enjoin that a human enemy needs to be treated at first kindly, politely, patiently and compassionately, because human nature was in the primordial state created uncorrupted, and as such kindness, politeness, mercy and pardon could subdue him. However, human beings who have lost their primordial state of innocence, and are deeply sunk in the ocean of ignorance, the passions and the vices of the lower self or base self drag man downwards away from Allah. Some have become infidels, unbelievers and tyrants. They have thus become frontal enemies and come out armed with weapons of war to wage a frontal combat against the believers. The Qur'ān prescribes in other verses that such human enemies should be repelled by force of arms. Unlike the accursed Satan, he is evil in his primal nature, and as such kindness, compassion and pardon does not bring a good effect on him. It is also impossible to have an armed conflict with him. So, the only defence against such an enemy is the celestial weapon of *dhikrullah* [Allah's Remembrance] and *ta'awwudh* [seeking refuge with Allah], with which the entire Qur'ān is replete and the Qur'ān appropriately ends with it.

Moreover, while dealing with a human enemy, a believer is never a loser. If he overcomes the enemy and prevails upon him, his victory is obvious. If the enemy overcomes him or even kills him, then too he will attain high rewards, and a high degree of martyrdom in the Hereafter

which is far better than any worldly attainments. In other words, if a believer is defeated by a human enemy he has not lost anything nor is he harmed in anyway. But the case of the Satanic enemy is totally different. It is sinful to flatter him or please him; and if someone is defeated by him, it is to destroy his entire future in the Hereafter. This is the reason why the best defensive weapon against him is to seek refuge in Allah. This celestial weapon is so powerful and potent that all Satanic guile and treacherous cunning or craft are rendered weak and ineffective.

The Guile of Satan is Feeble

On account of the reasons given above, it may not be misunderstood that fighting the Satan is difficult. To dispel this misunderstanding, Allah has said:

إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطٰنِ كَانَ ضَعِيْفًا

"...No doubt, the guile of the Satan is feeble." (4:76)

It is further clarified in Sūrah An-Naḥl:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْاٰنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ ﴿٩٨﴾ إِنَّهٗ لَيْسَ لَهٗ سُلْطٰنٌ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ إِنَّمَا سُلْطٰنُهٗ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهٗ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِهٖ مُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

"So, when you recite the Qur'ān, seek the protection of Allah against Satan, the accursed. He is such that he has no power over those who believe in Allah and place trust in their Lord. His power is only over those who befriend him and those who associate partners with Him. [16:98-100]"

Please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 5/pp 412-415 for concise commentary and fuller details of related rulings.

Relationship between the Prologue and the Epilogue of the Qur'ān

Allah prefaced the Qur'ān with Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah which began with His Personal name. It further described His predominant attributes as being *Rabb* or Maintainer of the universe; as being the All-Merciful and Very Merciful and the Sole Judge of rights and wrongs. It defined religion as being His worship alone and imploring Him alone for help - all else being powerless in comparison. It further taught man to pray for true

guidance so that he is able to find the right path, and be established in it. He is taught to pray to be saved from being among those who are condemned and those who have lost the right path after having received it. These factors serve the purpose of man's success and prosperity in this world and in the next world, that is the Hereafter. However, in the process of achieving this purpose man is obstructed by the accursed Satan. He lays various traps inconspicuously utilizing people's different weak points, their sensual and unhealthy desires which he detects and exploits. The Satanic traps or snares need to be shattered or broken to pieces. Seeking refuge in Allah is the only effective protection against these evil powers. That is why the Qur'ān most fittingly ends on this.

Conclusion

All Thanks are due to Allah that the *tafsīr* of the noble Qur'ān has ended with the grace of Allah, and His kindness and help. Praise be to Allah from the beginning to the end, outwardly and inwardly non-manifestly and manifestly. We would not have found the way, had Allah not guided us. May Allah shower His blessings upon the best of creation, Muḥammad ﷺ, His chosen Messenger, the Seal and the leader of the Prophets and Messengers عليهم السلام. Upon him and the other Messengers be His blessings and peace, upon his family and his Companions, all of them. O 'Our Lord, accept from us! Indeed, You - and You alone - are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing! This work completed on Saturday morning 21st of Sha'bān 1392 AH. Co-incidentally, this is the day I was born. I completed 77th year of my life and turned 78 years old. I pray to Allah and hope that the last days of my life would be the best part of my life, doing the best deeds; and that the best days of my life would be the day when I meet my Lord with the blessing of His clear Book and His trustworthy Prophet ﷺ; and that the efforts of this humble servant would be accepted, whose soul was exhausted by ailments, grief, distress and anxieties, and lack of strength; and that He would pardon my errors and shortcomings if the obligations toward His noble Book were not fulfilled; and that the Muslims would benefit by it for aeons of time; and that He makes this work a treasure-trove for the Day when there will be no trading and no friendship, when neither wealth nor family will be of any help. My ability and help to do things come from Him. Pure is Allah; praise be to Him; Pure is Allah, the Great!

The 8th volume of Tafsīr of Ma'āriful Qur'ān was revised between 3rd of Ramaḍān 1392 AH and Friday 10th of Shawwāl 1392 AH, taking about forty days. Praise be to Allah!

Alhamdulillah, the revision of the English version is completed on the night of 29 Ramadan 1424 A.H. corresponding to 25 November, 2003. May Allah bless this humble effort with His approval and pleasure, and make it beneficial for the readers. 'Āmīn

صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ الْعَظِيْمُ

Ṣadaqallāh-ul-'Āẓim

وَصَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّيْنَ، مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلٰى آلِهٖ وَصَحْبِهٖ وَسَلَّمْ

Wa ṣallallāhu 'ala nabiyyinā Muḥammadin wa 'alā 'Ālihī wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallam.

Alḥamdulillāhilladhīl-ladhī Ibni'matihī tatimmuṣṣāliḥāt

The translation of the text of the Holy Qur'ān completed on 16 Rabī'ul-Awwal 1424 A.H. corresponding to 19 May 2003 at Karachi on 11:25 forenoon

Muḥammad Taqi Usmānī, May Allah forgive him, and accept this humble effort in the service of the Holy Qur'ān, His eternal book of guidance. May Allah give us tawfiq to recite it, understand

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Nās
Ends here

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